MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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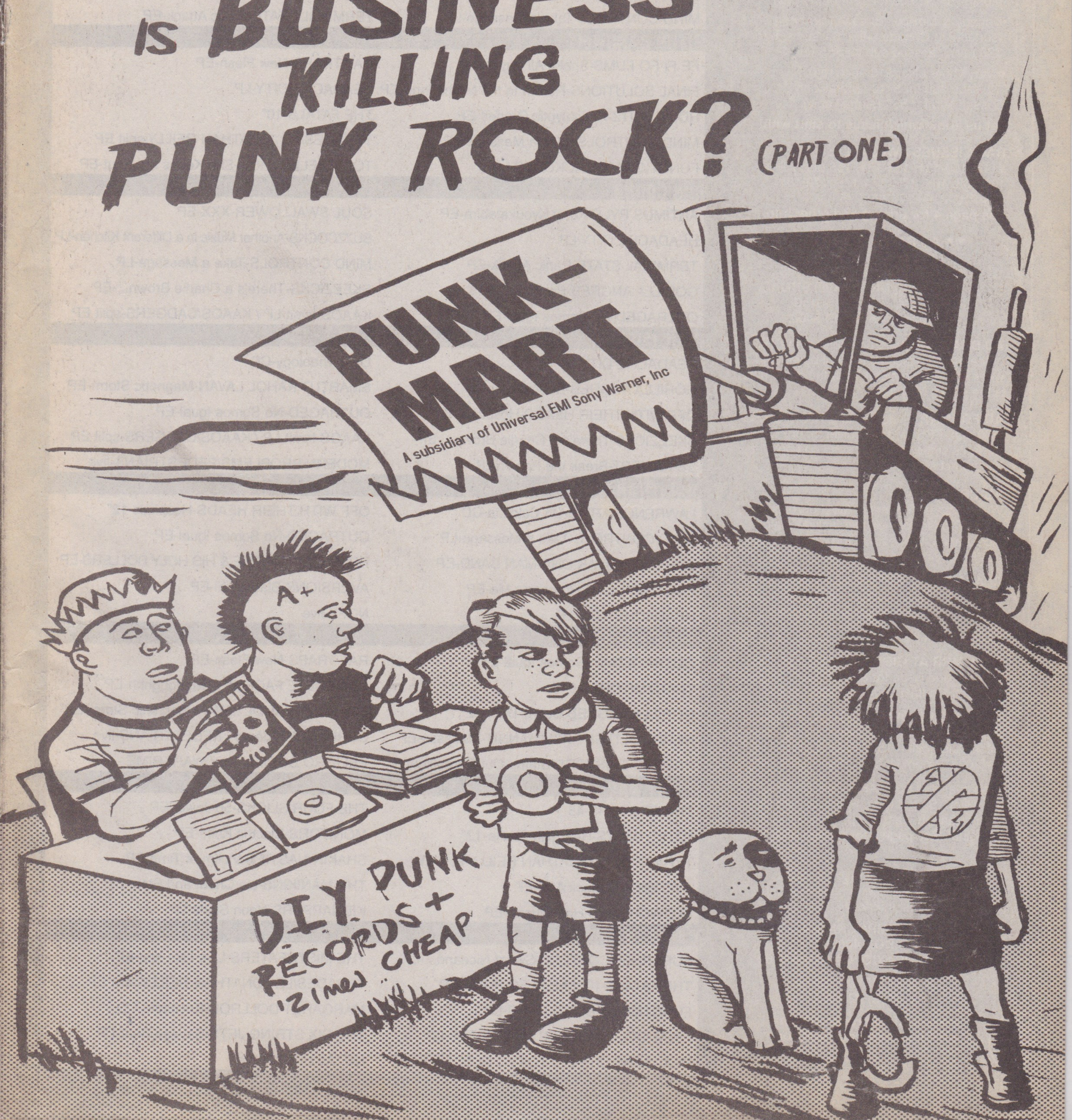

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- TRANZMITORS-45
- I WALK THE LINE-Desolation Street-LP
- HEADACHE CITY-LP
- KIDNAPPERS-Neon Signs-LP
- MIND CONTROLS-Take a Message-LP
- GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"
- TYRADES/LE JONATHAN REILLY-split EP
- FINAL SOLUTIONS-Return to the Motherland-EP
- KAAOS/CADGERS-split EP
- TERMINAL STATE-Panic Attack-EP

MITCH CARDWELL

- FE FI FO FUMS-Shake All Night-LP
- FINAL SOLUTIONS-Return to the Motherland-EP
- HOME BLITZ-Apocalyptic Grades-EP
- MIND CONTROLS-Take a Message-LP
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-LP
- RAT TRAPS-New Flesh-EP
- HEADACHE CITY-LP
- THE FATALS-10"
- TYRADES/LE JONATHAN REILLY-split EP
- TOKYO ELECTRON-She Keeps Me Shut-EP

ROB COONS

- ARTIMUS PYLE-Kuroi Kyoukatabira-EP
- HEADACHE CITY-LP
- TERMINAL STATE-Panic Attack-EP
- GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"
- OUTRAGED-No Somos Igual-EP
- SOUL SWALLOWER-XXX-EP
- BUZZCOCKS-Another Music in a Different Kitchen-LP
- MIND CONTROLS-Take a Message-LP
- SKEEZICKS-There's a Charlie Brown...-EP
- KAAOS-Ismit LP / KAAOS/CADGERS-split EP

PAUL CURRAN

- HEADACHE CITY-LP
- GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"
- OFF WITH THEIR HEADS-Hospitals-12"
- SKEEZICKS-There's a Charlie Brown...-EP
- SS-KALIERT-Break the Power-EP
- DAN-Theology-CD
- SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN-Magnetic Storm-EP
- OUTRAGED-No Somos Igual-EP
- KAAOS-Ismit LP / KAAOS/CADGERS-split EP
- MODERN PROBLEMS/PEDESTRIANS-live

JONATHAN FLOYD

- LAWRENCE ARMS-Oh Calcutta-CD
- MIND CONTROLS-Take a Message-LP
- JEFFREY NOVAK ONE MAN BAND-EP
- FUCK ME DEAD-Humanize Me-EP
- HEADACHE CITY-LP
- OFF WITH THEIR HEADS-Hospitals-12"
- OUTRAGED-No Somos Igual-EP
- REVEREND SAVAGE & HIS HOLY ROLLERS-EP
- AVERSIONS-Black Alibi-EP
- NOFX-live

CHRIS HUBBARD

- OUTRAGED-No Somos Igual-EP
- TRANZMITORS-45
- GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"
- NEUROOTTIISET PELIMANNIT-Putkassa-EP
- PSEUDO EXISTORS-Stamp Out Normality-LP
- RAT TRAPS-New Flesh-EP
- CONCRETE FACELIFT-Uuaaggghhh-EP
- SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN-Magnetic Storm-EP
- SURRENDER-demo / PEDESTRIANS-live
- PELIGRO SOCIAL-live / WARKRIME - live

KENNY KAOS

- TRANZMITORS-45
- RADIO BEATS-Ready to Shake-12"
- TYRADES/LE JONATHAN REILLY-split EP
- AVERSIONS-Black Alibi-EP
- BLOWCHUNKS-Hey Stupid!-EP
- THE FOUR SLICKS-56 Jewel-EP
- MONITORS-Electric Knife-EP
- SHAKIN NASTIES-Victim of Time-EP
- THE MANIKINS-Lie Cheat and Steal-CD
- KIDNAPPERS-Neon Signs-LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- SUPERHELICOPTERS-Sweet Niceand...-LP
- THE FATALS-10" / FE FI FO FUMS-LP
- FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-LP
- FINAL SOLUTIONS-EP / RAT TRAPS-EP
- HEADACHE CITY-LP / TOKYO ELECTRON-EP
- THE MISTREATERS-Live Like You-EP
- TYRADES/LE JONATHAN REILLY-split EP
- MARGARET DOLLROD-Enchanté-CD
- THE SIX STRING JETS-Savage Beat-EP
- METAL URBAN-live

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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: #148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 160-163, 166, 172, 174-175, 179-181, 184-210, 214-227, 229-275

See page 4 for pricing and other info.

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

WILL KINSER

SS-KALIERT-Break the Power-EP
PSEUDO EXISTORS-Stamp Out Normality-LP
LEFT FOR DEAD-Live-LP / KAMIKATZE-LP
BRUTAL KNIGHTS-The Pleasure is All Thine-LP
GORILLA ANGREB-12" / INFERNO-LP
MONSTER SQUAD-All Out of Control-EP
THE ADVERTS-Crossing the Red Sea with...-LP
SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN-Magnetic Storm-EP
KAAOS-Ismit LP / KAAOS/CADGERS-split EP
ARTIMUS PYLE-live

RAY LUJAN

KIDNAPPERS-Neon Signs-LP
STOKOE-The Experiment...-CD
GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"
SOON-Under TheWire-CD
ARMALITE-CD
TRANZMITORS-45 / THE FOUR SLICKS-EP
DAN-Theology-CD
THE BROKEDOWNS-These Colors Don't Run-CD
DEE RANGERS-Five Spanish Minutes-CD
SHAKIN NASTIES-Victim of Time-EP

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

TRANZMITORS-45
GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"
NEUROOTTIISET PELIMANNIT-Putkassa-EP
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS-Hospitals-12"
BRUTAL KNIGHTS-The Pleasure is All Thine-LP
ARTIMUS PYLE-Kuroi Kyoukatabira-EP
NAVIES-An Estate-12"
THE MANIKINS-Lie Cheat and Steal-CD
NOFX-Never Trust a Hippy-CD
SMIRK/EMANUELLES/XTROPOS-live

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

NEUROOTTIISET PELIMANNIT-Putkassa-EP
GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"
TYRADES/LE JONATHAN REILLY-split EP
SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN-Magnetic Storm-EP
FUCK ME DEAD-Humanize Me-EPD
DONÃ MALDAD-EP / OUTRAGED-EP
RAT TRAPS-New Flesh-EP
HEADACHE CITY-LP
FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS-LP
KAAOS-Ismit LP / KAAOS/CADGERS-split EP

DONNA POOLE

TOO SICK TO ROCK

BRUCE ROEHRS

SKIN DISORDER-Scars and Stripes-EP
STEEL TOE SOLUTION-The Eight Year War-CD
TERMINAL STATE-Panic Attack-EP
CONCRETE FACELIFT/RAT BYTE-split EP
OUTRAGED-EP / MONSTER SQUAD-EP
HATEFUL-Diamond Among the Coal-CD
DAMAGED-CD / ARTIMUS PYLE-EP
THE ACCELERATORS-Nowhere Near Funny-EP
RAT TRAPS-EP / SMUT PEDDLERS-live
SORETHUMBS / BROKEN BOTTLES-live

RYAN WELLS

FUCK ME DEAD-Humanize Me-EP
FINAL SOLUTIONS-Return to the Motherland-EP
FE FI FO FUMS-Shake All Night-LP
TYRADES/LE JONATHAN REILLY-split EP
HOME BLITZ-Apocalyptic Grades-EP
HEADACHE CITY-LP
RAT TRAPS-New Flesh-EP
KIDNAPPERS-Neon Signs-LP
BLIGHT-Detroit-CD
GORILLA ANGREB-Bedre Tider-12"

ZINE TOP TEN

Alphabet #1
Beat Motel #4
Dig It! #36
Ear Quake #88
Eskupe Al Alkade #16
Kissoff #11
Life's a Rape #1
Rocks and Blows #2
Rocktober #42
The Yellowrake #3

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#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#170/July '97. Tedio Boys, Mine, The Four Cockroaches, Meanwhile, Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hood Rat, Bristle, The Slits. Scene reports: West Canada, France, Indonesia.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y. Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality."

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#237/Feb '03. Top Ten Records of 2002, "Music as a Weapon: Artists in Wartime," Dirt Bike Annie, Let It Burn, Stockyard Stoics, King Khan & Shrines, 625 Records, Feast Or Famine, Rudimentary Peni, Coachwhips, Self Defense.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl, Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, SHIZO, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scene report

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oi!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene Reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

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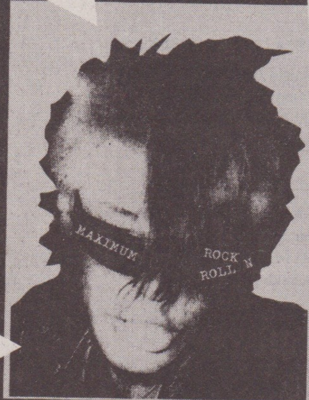

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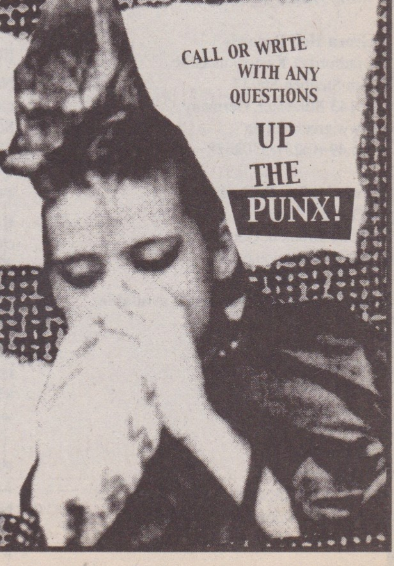

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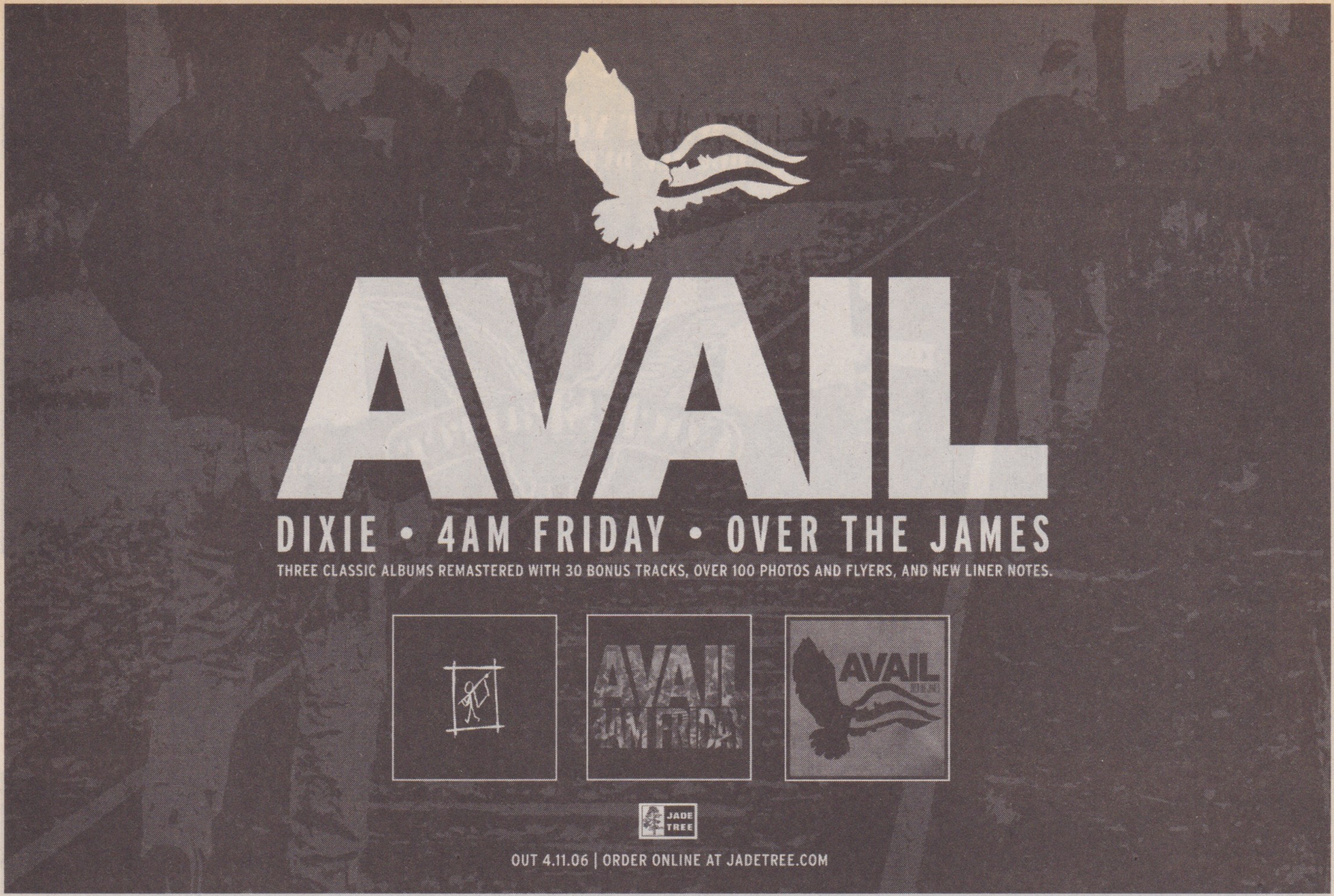

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MRR—

My name is Jim. I own a punk rock record store in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada called Reigning Sound. I opened in November, 2004 and since have hosted many in-store punk shows. This is a call to touring bands to get in touch if you're looking for a show in this area, which is about one hour from Buffalo, New York and about halfway to Toronto. The store can fit a maximum of 60 people and that's cramming them in, so you should keep that in mind. I usually charge a few bucks, which goes directly to the bands. I can also help out with club shows if I think it's worth it for you and for me. Get in touch, or just stop in sometime on your way through town. You can find a link to the store at www.thevapids.com. Thanks,

—Jim
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The nice people at MRR—

I have been reading your killer zine for a long, long time (since '99) and I really like your ideas of *real* punk. But now after looking at your website I must say that I am totally confused. Your support for the Casualties in your photo section seems like a contradiction to your own politics. The Casualties are part of Universal Corporate Industries Music and are now not even close to punk. Also, you have covered such sellouts in the magazine as BYO Records and Taang! I have heard that the dude or lady that owns BYO is part of Universal Records too! Man, I always looked up to you guys for denouncing all that fake major corporate fake punk like Ramones, Sex Pistols, Clash, Bad Brains, Stooges (they aren't even fast!!!) Chumbawamba, The Damned, and those Cramps. Hopefully, you can write me and tell me what is up. I am still your biggest fan, though. People like me need you guys to show us the way and if it wasn't for *MRR* I would probably not be into total fast music at all.

Circle A,
—Jim

Jim—

Thanks for writing. That photo of the Casualties on the website—which admittedly has been up there for a really long time, and should probably be rotated out for something else—is from a time when they were very much a part of the underground New York City punk scene; all of the photos on our site were provided by Chris(tine) Boarts, who documented the early '90s New York punk scene in her photography (some of which is featured in last month and this month's feature piece on New York DIY show space ABC No Rio). It's true that, to say the least, the Casualties are quite far removed from DIY punk—they are pretty much a total joke at this point—but the photo was from an earlier, less cynical time in their existence, which is why decided it was OK to include on the website.

As for Taang and BYO, I am not sure what coverage you are referring to because we certainly don't review their records or accept their ads—they are exclusively distributed by Fontana Distribution, which is indeed owned by Universal Records, the world's largest major label. Fuck 'em, we say. There is more about this topic in this issue, which you will hopefully, enjoy—there is quite a lot of writing in the next few pages about corporate influence on DIY and punk ethics. Thanks,

—Golnar

Dearest MRR and its readers—

First off, thanks for continuing to cover and support underground punk music—its important even in this day and age of the internet, message boards, and online zines. Anyways, I just wanted to let readers know that if they ordered a Straight To Hell *Commence The Apocalypse* LP (limited to 500), that I recently put out on my label Gloom, and used the address printed in your review in issue #275, they won 't be getting it. (MS)—Martin Sorrondeguy—mistakenly left off the "1" in front of the "4253" for my PO Box. The correct address is: Gloom Records PO Box 14253, Albany NY 12212 (www.gloomrecords.com)

I'm just covering myself for when I get blasted on message boards, letters, etc. for "ripping off" the kids. This is the first time anything like this has ever happened to me with the zine in ten years and thirty seven releases, so not too bad I guess. Keep up the good work, and thanks.

—Nate Wilson
Gloom Records

MRR—

I've never written to this magazine before even though I've been reading it for a while. But after reading a letter that someone sent in the March 2006 issue, #274, I decided that I'd write to you out of sheer irritation. The letter was sent in by someone named Justus, who was basically blaming the drink Sparks for him getting arrested for fucking with Nazi. Apparently, at a later date, the Nazi beat up and raped his own girlfriend. This chain of events is said to be the fault of Sparks, because if Justus hadn't drank it, he wouldn't have gone over there and the whole mess wouldn't have happened, even though the events appear to be totally unrelated.

What?! I'm pretty sure *MRR* printed that atrocity of a letter as a joke because of how absurd the entire thing is. Come on, dude! Give me a break! As we're discussing hardcore and punk kids (and I'm sure a lot of people anyway can be included), I would not be surprised if most of us haven't had alcohol related problems with the cops and such. So why don't you just grow up and take responsibility for your actions? Not that I'm defending Sparks or disagreeing with your actions, but seriously. The fact is that anyone who drinks alcohol and can't control themselves should probably just not drink. No one forced you to drink it. We're all aware that Sparks is a cheap and sure way to get fucked up and be fucked up for a while. Big surprise.

I also don't think it would have mattered if you would have "beat his ass later," you still would have gotten arrested for home invasion. Blaming it on alcohol is weak, especially when the events are unrelated. Your letter comes off more as a defeated attempt at being funny but even more so as a childish way to start drama (or something? What exactly do his Nazi tattoos from prison have to do with anything?). If he beat and raped his girlfriend, I am sure it was for more complex reasons

than because you enjoy drinking Sparks. So nice try. Sparks is hardly responsible for your doing something stupid, and it is hardly the "new heroin." I guess if people are too big of cowards to actually do heroin, it might be a nice, convenient way to look like a hard ass if that's what they're going for. But if Sparks is the new heroin, then I hope all the "punx" who believe that hurry up and die from alcohol poisoning before "Sparks stops the punx." Save that shit for your crappy Casualties punk "rawk" rip-off band so all you losers can wallow in your excuses and egos until you move on to the next trend. It wouldn't surprise me if you're writing in three years to *MRR* talking about how you used to be a drunk punk but are now a proud member of the straight edge elite. P.S. Keep up the good work, *MRR*.
Sincerely,
—1-6

Hey 1-6—
OK, just one thing—and I know it's not a big focus of your letter, but it is a pretty fucked opinion that I have to call you on—there is nothing "cowardly" about not doing heroin. Fuck that shit—it ruins peoples lives, it breaks up friendships, it spoils perfectly good punk bands, and it should be avoided at all costs. Thanks,
—Golnar

MRR—
I am writing to say *fuck you* and your commie propaganda magazine, you're nothing but a bunch of fucking fags.
—Anonymous Dave

AD—
Awww, thanks...it's been a while since we've gotten a letter like this and we were starting to think that we had lost our magic touch. It's letters like this that make the hours of work all worthwhile. Keep 'em coming, folks!
—Golnar

MRR—
My reason for writing this letter is to ask for help in regards to my thirteen-year old son Forest and his ambition to become a "maximum rock'n'roller." That he wants to be a rock 'n' roller is not the problem of course. You see, he lives in a small and somewhat sheltered community with limited outlets (and inlets) for underground DIY culture. The exact opposite was true in my case; I was a latch-key kid running amok in the suburbs of L.A. By the time I was his age, punk rock was the nexus of my life. All I had was my skateboard, my records, my Ritalin, and a kick ass, hard-working single mom. Your fanzine was never far from my reach. I didn't read it as much as I dug the artwork; of course, all the pictures of bands in full flail got me pumped. I was overwhelmed by the existence of all those punk bands from all over the world. Everything seemed so urgent and sincere—I could not be swayed in my hardcore loyalty. This is also about the first time I encountered law enforcement. Lost Angeles has the largest juvenile justice system in the world, and to say I had a problem with authority is a gross understatement.

I guess in a nutshell that that would explain why I'm composing this letter from the "Stripey Hole." I won't even begin to try to explain the grief and helplessness of being an incarcerated parent. Fortunately, like me, my son also has a kick-ass mom who tolerates and encourages radical, creative freedom. So when I asked him the big question one day, he said, " I want to be in a band." (That's my boy!) Right away, I arranged for him to get the gear he needed—guitar, amp, pedals, etc.—so that he could start shredding on a daily basis. He is also taking lessons—thanks grandma!

Now, what I was hoping to achieve by writing *MRR* is to open wider the doors of punk rock inspiration to him. Right now he can't go to where the punk rock is, so I'm asking all of you out there in the world to bring the punk to him. He is fucking awesome, and deserves the best. Please send encouraging words, zines, tapes, records, CDs, stickers, T-shirts, or anything else you can think of to Forest, PO Box 842, Kenwood, CA 95452.

Thank you for twenty plus years of sheer loudness,
—Quin Radtke
#2153431
850 Bryant St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

MRR—
Today, me and my mom went to this used book store down the street trying to sell some old books. All we wanted was a little extra cash. Right when we walked in, the old man took the bag from me without giving me a chance to explain why I was there. I assumed he knew since there was a sign in the window that said, "*Buy. Sell. Trade.*" Anways, he puts the bag on the counter and continues working while listening to the shittiest music ever (ladies singing in unison, saying "Fernando" over and over again). I was just standing watching other customers get helped and stuff. My mom came up it me and said, "Are you still waiting?" And I said, "Yeah, these other people are still getting service." Then my mom said to the old me, "Excuse me that's my daughter's bag right there." And he said, "And what am I supposed to do with them? Those aren't mine." Then I said, "Well, I wanted to sell those." Then old man replid, "It's pretty obvious that I don't want to buy those books from you. I told him that he could've said that to begin with. Then he says, "Do I look like I'm running some sort of book buying business?"

Well fuck. I guess that sign in the window kind of gave it away. I don't know what the hell his problem was. He was nice to all the senior citizens in there. I guess he didn't like that I wasn't buying anything from the store, but who when a used book costs $20. That would defeat the whole purpose of buying stuff used. I mean, don't people do that to save money? I dunno. All I know is that he was fucked up. Some old lady asked him for some "new wave Christian" books. Now, I don't know what the hell that is but he was all over it like it was his only mission in life. But I come in there expecting normal treatment but instead I get treated like I caught him on a bad day of arthritis pain. Well, sorry I don't have dry skin chizzling off my body every five seconds. And just 'cause I'm not all, "Lord Jesus!!" doesn't mean I should be treated any differently. No one deserves shit like that.
—Leona Steward
Antioch, California

Leona—
Sounds like a total nightmare, but it's a good example of why we're the punx—to fight crotchety old business owners, Christians (especially "new wave" Christians), and Abba fans alike. Thanks for your letter,
—Golnar

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS!

In the Best of 2005 feature in issue #274, Golnar mistakingly attributed the Marked Men 7" to Johnny Cat Records, when it in fact came out in Shit Sandwich Records. She apologizes for any confusion this may have caused.

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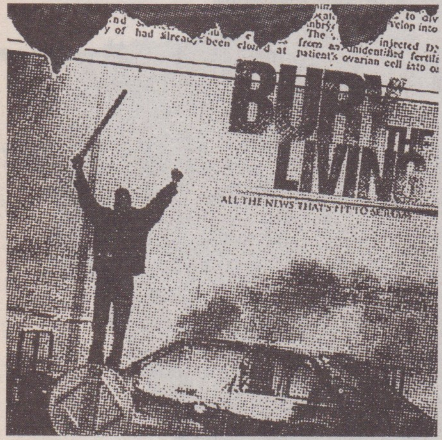

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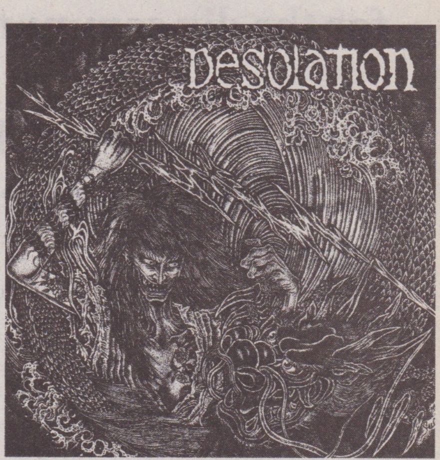

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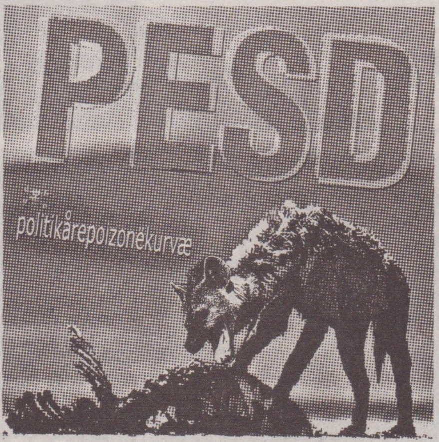

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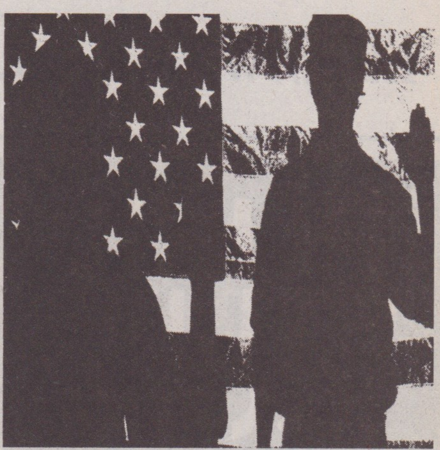

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COLUMNS

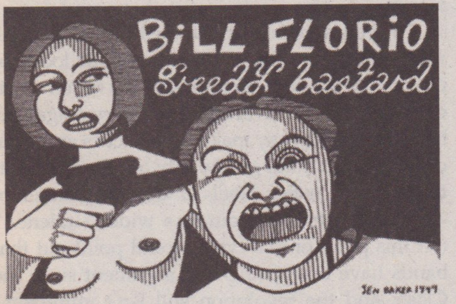
In this issue of *Maximumrocknroll*, we are tackling the issues of business, ethics, and major labels in punk rock. The original idea was to revisit the theme of issue *MRR* #113 from way back in 1994, an issue which bore the title "Major Labels: Some of Your Friends Are Already This Fucked" superimposed over a photograph of someone putting the barrel of pistol into their own mouth. The image was by no means meant to be taken literally, but the suicide of Kurt Kobain right around the time the mag hit the shelves really drove the point home. That issue of *Maximum* focused on the shadiness of major label business practices and the lameness of bands that "sign." Almost everything discussed in that issue is still relevant today, but a lot has changed as well. The major labels have pretty much moved out of the punk scene—they no longer need to go to the "underground" to find bands to exploit. Since NIRVANA and GREEN DAY—not to mention RANCID and GOOD CHARLOTTE (who I'm proud to say I've still never heard)—hit it big, a "punk" sound is as much a part of the mainstream rock 'n' roll soundscape as metal, folk, country, funk, or any other "influence" you'll hear in any given shitty song on the radio. Real punk rock bands are not needed when a label is looking fill the "punk" slot in its catalog—there are plenty of crappy, *crappy* bands, kinda influenced by, "like, you know, JAWBREAKER, THE PIXIES, AC/DC, JOY DIVISION, BAD RELIGION" clamoring to be on the cover of *AP*, *AMP*, *Zero*, or whetever, and open for FALL OUT BOY. Where the fuck do these bands come from? They always claim to be into punk but there's no fucking way any of those posers ever played a puke-filled basement show. Or am I just lucky to have never witnessed it?

So we thought that rather than focus entirely on the (still undeniably wretched) majors, we should look at how we in the truly independent, DIY punk scene do business. What does it meant to be "DIY" or "independent" and does it make a difference to the world or to our lives? Is there a set of rules we should be playing by? If an independent label signs and "develops" bands, has a publicity department, A&R people, sales people, "street teams," big-budget videos, and sells as many records as a major, then what makes them different from a major? And is it wrong to make money from punk rock?

Oh yes, we have many questions to ponder… Is trading MP3s stealing from your favorite punk bands? Is buying bootlegs unethical? Or what about this: if punks value independence from corporate influences, then why are we all on Rupert Murdoch's MySpace? And what are we doing inside and outside of our punk rock bubble to combat big business?

You will hear some folks lament that there was a time when the ethics of punk rock were pretty cut-and-dry. We were anti-corporate, anti-war, and challenged the status quo. Records and shows should be cheap, as should your band's equipment. Of course that was before there was ever an opportunity to have anything but cheap equipment, and a punk band could never fathom the idea of making a living off of its music. There's a lot of money going around in punk these days, most of it probably ending up in the hands of bigger labels, T-shirt manufacturers, people selling old records on eBay, bootleggers, and of course oil companies. But where should it be going?

—Paul



I think before you can analyze the music business and punk business and all entailed; you have to evaluate yourself as a fan of music. While most of us are striving to categorize groups of bands and their fans into a two-dimensional geographic lexicon, I would like to interject a third dimension—giving you something called punk scene calculus.

I've written before about how there's only three or four people in New York City that have the wits and gumption to cross the boundaries of sub-genre. I failed to mention what they all have in common. (No, they're not all bald! But that may be another column). They all do it alone (maybe one or two are dating couples, but for the most part, I am there alone and I see them there arriving alone).

So, as an urban or suburban or rural (provided you have your own car or mode of transportation) music fan, you must ask yourself, "Self…what percentage of shows this year have I gone to by myself, with little care about who would be there?" The foremost goal is to see a band even if most of your friends won't trek out with you. Are they not going because they aren't into music, or are they really just not interested unless it's going to be a social event for them? I mean, some people won't even frequent a record store without a small crowd to give them endorsement on their selections. You have to wonder what drives people in these little sub-genres of punk rock to dress up the way they do, what's the point of doing all the prep and shopping if you're just going to be ignored or fashionably stick out when you go to the wrong kind of show.

I used to have a problem going to movies alone, but once I did it, I felt dumb about having anxiety about it, and I must say I've benefited by seeing a lot more quality movies in the theater since. I've pretty much always gone to shows alone. In high school, the only people on that 2 Train were black skinheads and one black death metal dude. (I mean that they were African-American, not that they were only into Satan bands. Well, they probably were into Satan bands, but either way, they weren't going to see the Circle Jerks. The skinheads only went to tough-guy NYHC shows and the death metal dude only went to shows at squats; he was also kind of nerdy. I went to both, but for just about anything else I was on my own).

It's now 20 years later, and in reality, I can't be bothered trying to pry up people to go to a show with. Chances are, people I like will be there, and half the time I give them a ride home anyway. This group-driven show 'tude is what drives the Warped Tour, the package tour, and why I can't book a show with fewer than three awesome bands that has more than twelve people show up. I don't want to hear anyone complaining about these sorta ethical calamities when people I know and love think nothing of traveling over a thousand miles to see a show by themselves and others won't walk down the to the Student Union of the college they dorm at to see a show. This is where the problem starts. Not with a band's ethics, not with how music is distributed: it's all about graduating from junior high school; you can't be truly into independent music if you can't be personally independent too.

Junior high is basically ground zero, if you will, of all American culture. Everything about it is driven by humiliation and awkwardness. The worst movies, music, and popular culture are driven by those folks under fifteen and over twelve. Look in the margins of some pimply-faced kid's notebook and you'll find poetry worthy of mall-punk band lyrics and album artwork to match.

I did a small poll among friends this month. The question was, "What band's sticker would you put on someone else's car, bag, or skateboard as a joke?" This idea came to me when someone was complaining that he wanted to kick out the

bass player in his band and after a long list of lame actions. One of the items on the list was, "Has a PENNYWISE sticker on his bass."

That made me think. I have no problem with a lot of people I know liking bands I abhor, but there is this line you can cross where you are stating to the world, "Not only am I tasteless—I am also clueless." Mr. Callahan, the SHEMPS' organist, gave me a good example of this last week:

"My new roommate is pretty lame. I walked in on him ordering *Cheaper By The Dozen 2* on Pay Per View when I got home last night." I mean there's nothing wrong with indulging in lameness, but when you put forth effort that could easily be supplanted with something ten times better…you get the idea.

So, after a few days, I analyzed the results of my poll. I think I originally put up 24 bands or so. The big name emo bands got almost no votes, except ATREYU. I sadly suspect that the guys declined to select this as the worst of adhesive nightmares because they probably have a girlfriend, love-interest, or stalking-victim that loves bands like this stuff, or they have some sort of latent musical sexuality crisis that they don't want to get into at the moment. As for the females, they secretly like it, or they like guys in girls' pants. In either case, they'll overlook the horribleness of this type of fourteen-year-old androgynous rock because they believe they can use it to get laid somehow, and fear ruining their chances by speaking out about its fart-like qualities. So I sadly have to remove these results from the poll.

The most votes went to bands that have a fourteen-year-old fan base and huge major label marketing machines behind them: FALLOUT BOY, SIMPLE PLAN, and GOOD CHARLOTTE. This poll was taken by people supposedly into punk, and these bands represent punk like TACO BELL represents Mexican cuisine.

The rest of the results went about evenly, so I'll just separate them into categories.

There's the sell-outs: AGAINST ME! and ANTI-FLAG, bands that people generally feel betrayed by as they move from basements to arenas with no problem dropping all ethics in the name of feeding their ugly hick-town bastard children. Then we get on to bands that represent whole genres of lameness, EARTH CRISIS and BOLD, LEFTOVER CRACK (which got as many votes as EARTH CRISIS), TOTAL CHAOS and THE CASUALTIES. And finally, there's the unoriginal and terrible category of everything else: PENNYWISE, BOUNCING SOULS, THE TRANSPLANTS, DROPKICK MURPHY'S, VOODOO GLOW SKULLS.

The winner of the poll was LIMP BISKIT, which got almost ten percent of the votes. The loser was THE QUEERS, who got only one homophobic prankster vote. I guess LIMP BISKIT is the band you make fun of if you have a FALLOUT BOY t-shirt on. It's sorta like how while all white rap groups are pretty weak, 3rd BASS can write a song dissing VANILLA ICE, and VANILLA ICE can write one about MARKY MARK. Someone has to be at the bottom of the lame-ladder.

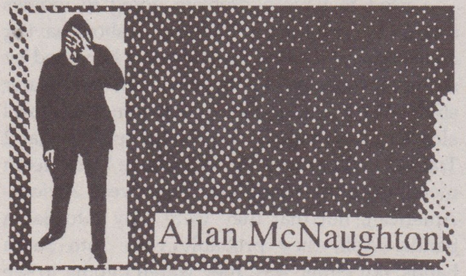
But getting back to our midsection of bands that were chosen, if you think about BOUNCING SOULS, LEFTOVER CRACK, PENNYWISE, THE CASUALTIES, these bands really aren't on the frat-boy radar that LIMP BISKIT or FALLOUT boy are on, or ANTI-FLAG and AGAINST ME hope to be on. It's like you just entered that wonderful out-of-the-way Italian bakery that is punk rock. No more Dunkin' Donuts or 7-11; now you can get that nice fresh baked-by-real-people sorta rock. I mean, liking one of these bands when you're thirteen actually makes you relatively cool compared to your classmates that are sneaking into movies like *Date Movie*.

With this sort of exposure you'd think it easy to dive a little deeper and seek out music that can actually bring lifelong fulfillment as a future record-collector, show-goer, zine contributor, record label starter, or band member. But, if you're pushing 25 and you still are going to see those bands, you missed the ferry—you walked into that bakery and opted for the Twinkie on the counter. It was too scary to ask the fat woman to cut you a slice of Napoleon; it was too much trouble waiting for the girl in front of you to select the exact number of assorted butter cookies to equal exactly a quarter of a pound. You just dropped your buck on the counter and accepted the Twinkie and in a few years, it'll be that much easier to switch to Yodels, and who needs to go to that out-of-the-way bakery all by myself when I can just buy a case of Twinkies and Yodels at Wal-Mart, all my friends eat Yodels, and oh shit, I think I'll buy a LIMP BISKIT record in ten years for its retro-kitsch-value…

So really, I see punk rock as not so much a sound—it's more of the actions the represented fans take to hear a band. There are a lot of different ways to go at this punk scene calculus problem. A real fan is not going to be fickle about how the crowd at a particular show seems to dress; they are willing to accept lame tastes when a sincere effort is still being put into it. A real band is simply going to attract real fans. If you see that minority of lone-adventurers at their show, you know they must be doing something right.

Everyone has to swallow that cheese Danish they picked off the table by accident sometimes. But you should have the good sense to feel cheated if the fat lady put a fucking Twinkie in the nice box tied up with string and wants you to call it dessert.

OK, email me, I'm feeling hungry now:
bill@candids.com



The funny thing about re-reading the original major-label theme issue from twelve years ago is marveling about some of the bands that were getting snapped up in the bidding frenzy but either went nowhere, broke up, got dropped, or came crawling back to their previous indie homes. OK, Green Day is now one of the biggest rock bands on the planet, and we all know what happened to Nirvana. But it's a fucking joke now that anyone cared about Seaweed, Jawbox, or Samiam, for example. I'm not making a judgment call on the quality of those bands, but with hindsight, it's clear that their signing to majors wasn't really worth making a fuss about.

The majors don't need to bother snapping up the hot indie bands any more anyway. They've got a conveyor belt of starry-eyed youngsters with no greater ambition than to get on the Warped Tour, sign to a major, make a video, and get on MTV Cribs. They got their claws into Against Me! (anyone running a pool on how long 'til they break up?) but even if they hadn't, they'd have got someone who sounds just like them before too long.

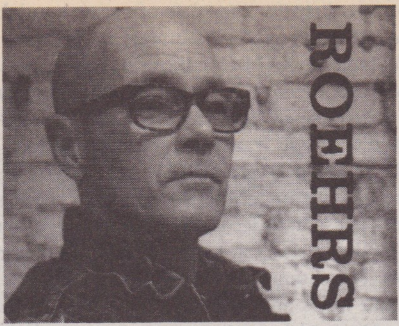
All of that stuff happens outside the punk scene these days, pretty much, but the more insidious threat is the way so-called punk labels and bands are adopting the tactics of the majors. On the surface, their efforts are transparent and hilarious, but it's the sense of competition where there used to be a spirit of cooperation that is sapping punk of a lot of its potential, its power, and a great deal of what makes it fun.

The world at large would think it bizarre—to say the least—that we even think the issue of major labels is worth discussing. It's generally accepted that bands only put out records on indie labels (or by themselves) as a means to get noticed by majors. It's seen as a sign of astute business acumen when an independent label sells out to (or strikes some kind of deal with) a major label. The owners of independent labels who do this are held up as true American success stories.

The labels that churn out the bulk of the punk rock product on the CD racks at your local (or online) record store, including many (if not most) of the labels that advertise in this very magazine, have adopted sleazy major-label tactics and even collude (sometimes grudgingly but rarely unwittingly) with major labels under the banner of "getting the message out to a wider audience." (At this point only a cynic would point out that bands have been using that argument since the Clash, and the revolution still isn't imminent.) Actually, the true grounds for playing the game the way the majors do seems less about spreading some spurious message and more about simply surviving. The music press is constantly (if prematurely) heralding the death of the music industry and it is true that record sales are in decline (although sales of music downloads threaten to make up the difference). The combined sales of all independent labels (including those with some sort of major-label distribution or P&D) probably amounts to less than 20% of an already shrinking pie. So there's a lot of competition for a pretty small prize. At some level, these labels might think that anything they do is justified to help them compete with the majors on a more level playing field, but they're kidding themselves. They are only competing with each other, and every step they take that gives the majors a taste of their action just makes the imbalance even more pronounced.

A couple of specific tactics that are (on the surface) pathetic and amusing but that are also pretty depressing are the prevalence of street teams and publicists. Independent and major labels willingly sucker their bands' fans into doing free promotional work for them, in the guise of making them feel like extra special insiders and probably in exchange for a free CD or concert ticket. Then there's the whole magazine publicist thing. There's very little chance that a band on a true independent will make it into the pages of *Rolling Stone* magazine. However, tons of glossy, "alternative" magazines have sprung up to fill the void that *RS* has left by only covering acts in the *Billboard* Top 40. You only have to go to your local Borders or Barnes & Noble to check them out. You'll notice, though, that by some strange coincidence, they're all covering the exact same bands, and all those bands happen to have a new album just about to come out. Now do you suppose that twenty different magazine editors got up one morning and thought, I know, I'll put [current indie pants-soakers du jour] on the cover, because they're my favorite band right now!" Not on your life. Most articles you see in those alternative magazines on the newsstand (and almost certainly all the cover stories) are there because the label paid someone to suck up to the editor and/or because the label advertises in the magazine. Actually, these days even those cutting-edge indie magazines are more than likely to have major label bands on their covers—you know, the cutting edge major label bands. "Hey, Death Cab on the cover equals guaranteed sales man, and then we can turn even more people on to the truly indie shit in our mag. It's all in the name of getting the message out…" It would be almost tolerable, or at least respectable, if these people were getting anything out of shilling themselves to the machine, but most of these mags, even the glossiest ones with the ridiculous advertising rates, are basically voluntary concerns, just like MRR. The editors and contributors work day jobs and then put their creative energy, spare time, and sweat into producing what is essentially free publicity for the major labels (and the best kind too, the kind with street cred). They do this in the hope that the magazine will grow and they'll be able to command increasingly high ad rates and will get enough juice with major-label publicity departments that they'll be able to conduct backstage interviews with today's hottest stars, and eventually their mag will be the next *Spin*.

So yeah, NEWSFLASH! The music industry is sleazy and fucked! Punk rock as we know and love it developed over almost 30 years as a true alternative to the ego-driven, fame and publicity hungry, cutthroat, competitive world of the conventional music industry. It's still the case that a lot of the best music is being made on truly DIY independent labels. So let's just keep enjoying it. Let the people who are content to put themselves up for sale go on their merry way, and good luck to them. But when it's obvious that bands or labels are obviously keeping one foot in the punk camp for the credibility while simultaneously chasing mainstream stardom, let's withdraw our support, expose them, and mock their ridiculous press kits.



You Decide

Holy crap! Hold on to your beer! Armen's Headache Records, from New Jersey, presents SKIN DISORDER's *Scars and Stripes* EP. It's time for serious skinhead mischief! SKIN DISORDER, from New York City, USA have dropped a skull smashing skinhead EP. We have been waiting for this fucker all year! SKIN DISORDER recruited Carl Fritscher (TEMPLARS) for recording and engineering and Armen (WRETCHED ONES) for vinyl production.

SKIN DISORDER has created a fucking skinhead milestone. These skins hammer you right from the first note on the first song on side A. The title cut, "Scars and Stripes," is truly great! The second song keeps the motor revving—"New York City" is a strong slice of working class pride!

Side B starts off quietly with "Backstabber." This tune gets stronger and stronger until you have a fucking full-blown skinhead anthem! Yes! The vocals on this record are right on the mark! Song number four is "Soldier Skin." This song has a stop-start cadence that compliments the powerful lyrics!

Put your boots on skinhead! Go buy *Scars and Stripes*. Go see SKIN DISORDER when they come to your town. Job well done SKIN DISORDER! Order this EP from Headache Records, PO Box 204, Midland Park, New Jersey, 07432, www.headacherecords.com.

Fuckin' A! STEEL TOE SOLUTION, from the Garden State of New Jersey has a ripping new CD out on Armen's Headache Records! *The Eight Year War* CD is chock-full of real good skinhead anthems! This CD starts out with an up-tempo Oi! Number, "Your Walls Falling," and then settles right into a heartfelt song with a message, "Slave." Song number three is called "Enemy Mine." You can feel the animosity bristling in these hard vocals and crunching guitar bombshells. Next up is "Mission," followed by "Without Us," one of the strongest tunes on this solid thirteen song CD. "Without Us" has great sing-a-long choruses with vehement guitar punctuation. Very good! Song six is called "Harder Than You." This melodic skinhead music features backing vocals from Jenny Whiskey and Eva Talmadge to give the refined touch that you skins and punks are looking for!

We push right through "Dick in the Dirt" and arrive at "Little Boy Blue," about those asshole cops we all have dealt with. Song nine is "In Doctrine Nation." Song ten is "Bloodsucker," about the travails of working class men and women with bosses paying minimum wage and draining the life out of the workers. "Wrong Side of the Pond" is a celebration of American Oi! and American life. There is no romanticizing about UK music or lifestyle. "Klusterfuck" winds you up good and tight, and then anthem #1 unleashes the full force of STEEL TOE SOLUTIONS' armaments. Great!

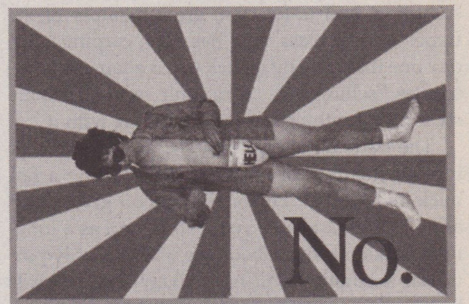
This is a very good CD! For your copy of the *Eight Year War*, write to Headache Records, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432, www.headacherecords.com.

TERMINAL STATE, from Nazareth, Pennsylvania, has one kick-ass single out for you punks! This may well be the best punk single you will hear for many months. This is raw, visceral punk rock with no holds barred!

TERMINAL STATE starts this punk fuselage with "Punk Attack," a fucking feverish bludgeoning of your senses! This has the nastiness and vitriol of a 1982 hardcore band. This shit is urgent and dangerous! Song two on this brutal punk disc is "Bloodstains Across Your Face"—fucking ruthless! Song three keeps up the sick momentum "Hit Me" won't allow you to even catch your breath!

TERMINAL STATE finishes you off with "Rats"—fuck yes! You will now know hardcore punk according to Pennsylvania rules! Absolutely killer! Write to: TERMINAL STATE at Hate the '80s Records, 204 Belvedere St, Nazareth, PA 18064.

OUTRAGED from Watsonville, California has a great new EP out on Martin's Lengua Armada label. You may recall the strong split EP that OUTRAGED had two months ago—this *No Somos Igual* brings the thrash to the next level. Side A offers: "Autoridad de Mierda," "Extraviada," "Violencia," and "Runaway." Side B includes the title track, "No Somos Igual," "Ojos Del Racismo," "23 Hours," and "Pestilence." Fucking great hardcore is the reward you get! These punks wear their politics on their shirtsleeves. They are pissed off! This record rocks! Contact OUTRAGED for your copy at 345 East Beach St, Apt E, Watsonville, CA 95078, www.XoutragedX.com



The last couple of decades, particularly the 1990s, have seen a plethora of small businesses open up in the US under a purportedly "punk" aesthetic and sense of ethics. This is the American way, no doubt about it. A pop culture reaction that started with a clearly defined agenda of nihilism and a take-the-money-and-run mentality soon gave birth to a movement shot through with anti-capitalist and more traditional anarcho-syndicalist ideas. This, in turn, gave way to a full-blown subculture deeply committed to an unflinching replication of the style and ideas of

its predecessors, replete with scores of highly specialized business ventures competing for the grubby dollars of its ever-growing target market. Nothing really avoidable about this, I guess. We live in a consumer society. We like to buy music, we like to buy books, we like (and have) to buy clothes. As a culture, we are raised to get STUFF, and very little is going to change that. However, differently from the average consumer, our subculture also likes to produce STUFF ourselves and to our liking, and screw anyone who says we don't have the talent (or $) to do so. This is one of the better legacies of those first few years of punk, and one of the few that is common to all of its factions. Buying art and products that are made by someone you know (or could easily know) is a good way to subvert the impersonal economic system we live in. Ideally, in "our world," the work of the maker of an object is inherently connected to the value of that object, and their labor is not simply a commodity. Punk as craftspersonship. Sounds very nice.

It doesn't quite work that way, of course. Let's assume you are a stalwart producer of "DIY" products. The paper you use for your zine came from trees that other people (corporations) felled and milled, the T-shirt you screened a band logo onto came from a sweatshop in China, the 7" you just pressed was molded from oil stained with the blood of the Iraqi people, etc. etc. etc. Sometimes we can do positive little things like buying recycled paper, getting our T-shirts in the thrift store, and so forth and so on, but let's face it: when you make a bunch of any one thing to sell, someone is getting fucked along the way.

While much of this is inevitable when it comes to "DIY" products, it becomes more obviously complex when a lot of whatever it is you sell begins to be sold. While a few entities (MRR, Gilman, etc.) have taken the tack of collective stewardship of their institutions (generally thanks to the generosity of an initial large donation or two from enthusiastic individuals), most just turn into a business. Economic success is a reality that occasionally happens in this society when one puts something out on the market for public consumption, and unless you are a member of the upper middle class who has been carping since day one that making a buck (even a fair one) constitutes "selling out," it doesn't seem like there should be anything supremely wrong with it.

The issue here, of course, is how "punk" fits into all this talk of business and making a fair buck and all that. Personally, I don't give a rat's ass. I'm gonna keep buying stuff, and as a long-time adherent to a subculture with a highly particular aesthetic I will most likely lean towards buying from others who understand that aesthetic and know how to express it in a way I like. What I do care about is that these businesses behave in a manner consistent with the ethics I believe in, and this applies to wee little boutique "punk" businesses as readily as it does to the burgeoning "punk" success stories that produce a lot of what we buy.

So, are you trying to "target market" me for your products? It makes me feel icky, but OK. Unfortunately, the Converse company doesn't read *MRR* and thus it is somewhat useless to excoriate them for their use of sweatshop labor here (although you shoe buyers might want to think twice about buying those crappy things). If you do happen to be a business owner and reading this, however, here's a list of what I think you should do if you want me to buy your crap:

1) Charge a decent price. Don't feel you have to be totally competitive with bigger businesses taking a loss in order to undercut you, but don't sell your "cachet" at unreasonably high prices either. I can assure you, your shit still stinks.

2) Be quick and straightforward in your dealings. Oh, and honest—try not to conceal extra charges and the like.

3) IMPORTANT: If you are doing well enough to actually have employees, pay them a *good wage* and give them medical insurance and other benefits that people usually have to rely on a union to get. My uncle John *starts* his employees at over 10 bucks an hour in a friggin' pizza joint and gives them medical insurance and he's a *goddamned Republican*. You hear me, *Cinder Block T-Shirts*? Or have you guys started giving people medical insurance yet? I really hope so. You sure do seem to make a lot of money.

4) Try to get raw materials from less fucked-up sources, if you can. Oh, and advertising this fact is a really good idea.

5) While you're at it, make sure the stuff you're putting out is good quality.

6) If you are at a level where you can seriously help monetarily advance some really good independent projects or sociopolitical agendas, do it. Especially radical punk shit that wants to have people like you put up against a wall and shot.

7) Try not to fuck up the environment. While you're at it, please buy a sensible car, if you do end up getting one.

8) Try to avoid making deals with the hardcore capitalist devils, if possible. All I'm saying is: know who your money is going to. Support union labor. You get the picture.

Is this all "punk"? Not really. In fact, it could be the most conservative thing I've ever written—not that punk isn't conservative, at this point. But I'm not going to get back into that. The point is, this should apply as readily to business that don't have any hand in marketing the "punk" aesthetic as those that do. If you're going to run a business and be a capitalist, just try to respect others as much as possible. Don't make my Republican uncle John more punk than you.

—Johnny Mink, PO Box 3026, Oakland, Ca. 94609

While I was brainstorming about what I was going to write about here—the topic was going to be how religious fanaticism is corrupting and influencing too many aspects of American society—Paul informed the hard-workin' MRR columnists, myself included, that he wants our input on the business ethics of punk rock and gave us a series of possible topics to write about. I've decided to write about my own experiences, how I've approached it and how it's changed. How I've come full circle in a way. Forgive the navel gazing but maybe it'll give you some insight. I may write about wider-ranging topics on these matters in upcoming columns.

My feelings about DIY have shifted over the years. I started out my 'zine, *Suburban Voice* (*Suburban Punk*, initially), as a completely do-it-yourself effort, without much in the way of advertising (and those were strictly independent labels). Eventually, as my 'zine increased its print run, larger labels started advertising with me. I probably treated it more like a business and kind of lost sight of why I started doing it in the first place.

At one point, I thought I wanted a career in the so-called "music biz." I had spent some time in music retail, working for an independent store. Around '89 or so, I actually interviewed for a label that was going to be distributed by Relativity distribution, which later became RED and major-label distributed. The label was to be called Urgent, which immediately makes the mediocre Foreigner song pop into my head. I decided not to pursue it, mainly because I couldn't see myself babysitting bands and also didn't want to move to New York. Urgent was soon renamed In-Effect, which some of you may remember releasing albums by Agnostic Front, Sick Of It All, and funk-metallers 24-7 Spyz and Scatterbrain (post-Ludichrist)—jesus, remember that trend? If you're too young to remember it or ignored it, be *very* grateful. About the latter band, the incomparable Paul Bearer from Sheer Terror commented, "they mix metal and funk—what an original concept. Ooo, fucking geniuses."

But In-Effect created kind of a shitstorm at the time with some people thinking that Relativity was cashing in on hardcore, and that bands were foolish to sign with them. I have an MP3 file, somewhere, of the infamous debate involving members of Sick Of It All, Born Against, and In-Effect honcho/Agnostic Front and Straw Dogs guitarist Steve Martin, and it got pretty heated. A few years after that, I interviewed for a marketing job at Mechanic Records, which was a boutique label created by MCA that put out mainly metal bands, some of 'em OK, such as Voivod. Once again, though, I decided I couldn't move to NYC. I think I'd be a fish out of water moving away from the Boston area. Also, by working in retail I learned about how the machinations of the music business operated, how it was commerce above all. I dealt with promotional people aiming to get me to inflate the sales figures of their records for our reports to various trade publications. While I wasn't above taking their swag—going to open-bar parties, getting free records, etc.—something did feel dirty about it.

The last one of those parties I went to (the first in a long time) was a Fat Wreck Chords party in '03 at the swanky BB King's club in NYC and it felt odd to me.

Back in the late '80s and early '90s, though, the reasons I didn't want the job had more to do with fear about what I'd be getting into, as well as the move. I didn't think much about the DIY aesthetic. I did my zine on my own terms but it was distributed by Caroline and Relativity, among others. In fact, my distribution by Caroline caused The Pist to decide against giving me a track for one of the 7"s that came with my zine, after initially agreeing to do it. Later, when I dropped Caroline and only dealt with independent distributors, they did give me a track.

When they withdrew their track, I was really pissed (sorry) about it for a time but it did get me thinking about how I wanted to run my "business." I do have to keep an eye on the finances and make sure I don't end up losing money but it's not done with the profit motive in mind. Relatives will ask me how "business" is, if I'm making a living off it. It's hard for me to explain that I do it as a labor of love to write about music that still gives me a kick in the ass.

I wanted to get the zine back to basics, just covering the bands I wanted to. I started to deal with publicists less and less. Fortunately, when I moved in '97, a lot of those calls stopped as they didn't get my new phone number, although I still get a fair amount of press-release emails and follow-ups from publicists asking if I'm going to review the record and if I want to interview their bands. I've finally learned how to say no. It's about what I'm into, not acting as an adjunct to some label's publicity department.

In effect though (sorry, once again), the Pist "incident" did act as something of a wakeup call. This was in the mid-'90s, a tumultuous time where I got laid off at the record store that I'd worked at/managed for eight years, and then went through a major debacle opening my own store, with financial backing from a washed-up rock star… I don't have the space to detail that one but I've certainly told people the story over the years. At the same time, I re-discovered my record collection and started to learn more about the thriving DIY punk and hardcore scene I'd been ignoring for a long time. Some of the shows were in rock clubs and that created its own controversy, but I also started to go to shows in basements and halls again. It felt like a rebirth and made me remember how much fun it could be, away from the mainstream conception of punk, away from the crass commerce, away from the lame club atmosphere. It was inspiring, once again.

I haven't published my zine in a few years, but it'll be back, eventually. One thing I probably won't do is accept advertising from the larger labels, such as Epitaph. It's true I do review some records with dubious corporate ties and odd major label release (but *very* seldom now). I want the smaller labels and bands to advertise and I'm trying to keep my ad rates within their budget. It's tough for independent and DIY labels, stores and even zines. Mainly, the thing that's important is having autonomy over my work, whether it's in my zine, here, or some of the other magazines I write for. I'm a control freak, in that way. I'll make my own mistakes and don't want to be subjected to any editing. Some of you probably know I do write for a more music business oriented magazine but they don't edit my work—it goes in just as I write it. Once again, that creates some mixed feelings as that magazine is sold in such crappy stores as Hot Topic.

It's the same with my radio show—having complete autonomy. At this point, it's DIY in that I create it myself, on my own equipment. True, it's on the internet only and that does set up barriers for people without computers. But it did start at a community station in Boston and I was there for five years and able to do my show uncensored and without interference because that's the only way I'll do it. When the station folded, I decided to keep it going myself. Without a broadcast outlet, I took things into my own hands and I record it live at my house every week. I do clean it up with an editing program and punch in a few MP3s if I don't have the songs on vinyl or CD.

A lot *has* shifted to the internet and, like a lot of people, MySpace has become something of an addiction. It's a lot different from when I had pen pals and I'd exchange records and correspondence with friends all around the world. I still do that occasionally, but not nearly as much. It's mostly electronic these days. I have entries on MySpace for myself, my zine, and radio show and I have to admit it's been a good way to connect with people, to find music to play on my radio show (same with the MP3 blogs) and get to hear from long-lost friends and acquaintances. I'm aware it's owned by the scummy Rupert Murdoch so maybe there's some hypocrisy in there. I admit to enjoying the instant gratification of it but I also enjoy dropping a needle on a record as much, if not more.

So those are my feelings, in a (lengthy) nutshell. I'm committed to DIY, even if certain things I do aren't necessarily that way. I do the best I can…trying to work through it as best I can, with as few compromises as possible.

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On to the record reviews…and none of these labels (as far as I know) have corporate ties. I think I've stuck to my guns in this column by only reviewing records put out with a DIY and/or independent ethic. And, yes, there are quite a few this time, after a quiet couple of months. I know a lot of these labels don't have a ton of money to send out review copies (much appreciated!) and I've frequently reviewed records in this column that I've paid for…

BILL BONDSMEN – s/t (Acme, 7" EP)
The second EP from the Michigan-based Bondsmen and dishing out some slashing hardcore. Not fitting any mold—yowling vocals and arrangements that bring to mind a combination of Poison Idea, Black Flag and Die Kreuzen, yet they have their own sound. Following me here? If punk is supposed to convey feelings of alienation, these guys have it down. Ends with a good 'n' raw cover of the Alan Millman Sect's "Stitches In My Head/I Wanna Kill Somebody." Hell yeah… (PO Box 441, Dracut, MA 01826, www.acmerecords.com)

BRUTAL KNIGHTS – *The Pleasure Is All Thine* (Deranged, CD)
Rock 'n' fuckin' roll. How many times have you heard that phrase? Well, prepare to hear it again because these Torontonians have a slam-bang sound, packing the fury of punk with non-wanky rock 'n' roll moves. Their first 7" was OK if nothing extraordinary, and I wasn't sure what to expect with this album. From the opening chords of "KWC," aka "Katie Wants Cock," there's a big difference. Incidentally, if you're wondering about the title, keep in mind the guitarist's name is Katie and the chorus goes "she's not missing much." Nick, the vocalist, used to be in the Teen Crud Combo (whose LP is reviewed here) and it's the same wise-assed lyrics and full-bore energy. (www.derangedrecords.com)

COP ON FIRE / VISIONS OF WAR – split (Profane Existence, LP)
Over the top fury by each of these European bands—Cop On Fire hail from Belgium and Visions of War are based out of Spain. Scandicore with the guitars tuned down a little and a thick sound punctuated by harsh vocals, both at fast and medium speed. Visions Of War also has a loud 'n' speedy ScandiDisAttack with two howling vocalists and, after the pillage, they wrap it up with a cover of "I Love Rock 'n' Roll" renamed "I Love Drink and Roll" and that lightens the mood a bit after all the doom and gloom—which, of course, is appropriate. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

DUDMAN – s/t (625, 7" EP)
NK6 / DUDMAN – split (625, 7" EP)
Distort hell—this is pain and terror. Dudman plow through their record and half with a cacophonous, speedy tumult. Taking the traditional Japanese hardcore sound, speeding it up a bit and adding a lot more noise. The same goes for NK6, with a recording that's a lot more raw than on their Deranged LP that I have. Not for those with sensitive ears. (www.625thrash.com)

THE HORROR – *The Fear, the Terror, the Horror* (Chainsaw Safety, CD)
There's always talk about this band or that being the next hot thing from the UK and it's usually some watered down foppish shite, as they say over there. Fuck *all* of that shite, er, shit—The Horror is my favorite English band in recent years. Following a pair of mini-albums (compiled on one CD awhile back), here's their new album and it's just as wailing. Thrashy hardcore that's succinct and to-the-point both musically and lyrically. Songs that go from double-speed thrash to a more traditional pace to mid-tempo ass-kick. The post-mortems on Reagan continue with "Reagan's Out," and Maggie Thatcher doesn't escape their wrath either ("Still Hate Thatcher"), nor does the current (and unelected)

White House resident. I don't need to prattle on or come up with other adjectives to express that this album hits hard. (www.chainsawsafetyrecords.com)

IMPERIAL LEATHER – *Something Out of Nothing* **(Profane Existence, CD)**
Punk rock 'n' roll with male/female vocalists, both of 'em forceful, and one of them is Amyl from the old New York band the Spider Cunts. A follow-up to their four-song EP in 2004, continuing with their melody-driven punk rock 'n' roll sound. This band features a bunch of Swedish punk and hardcore veterans are in the band and the experience shows up in the musical ability, but this is something different from the usual thrash mayhem one associates with their other bands. It's got loud, beefy guitars and a medium tempo to go along with the ragged vocal trade-offs. Extra kudos for their leave-me-alone anthem "Hell Is Other People." (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

LEFT FOR DEAD – *Live* **(Deranged, LP)**
I'm not too big a fan of live records. That said, this is a scorcher, recorded at a reunion show they did in 2004 in to benefit a friend's film project. Lower-tuned thrash and heaviness and a thick, pummeling sound. It starts off with one of my favorite songs by them, "Who Do You Know?," starting without introduction or fanfare and with the sound of fireworks being detonated in the background. Brutal from start to finish and hearing them cover COC's "Kiss Of Death" reminds me of how good that band was at one point. I'm sorry I never got to see this band. (www.derangedrecords.com)

MURDER DISCO X – *Ground Zero Stuttgart* **(Profane Existence, CD)**
Murdering disco, eh? Fine with me—I was one of the original "disco sucks" guys. This band has nothing to do with dance music, unless your idea of dancing is going in a big circle and jumping around like a maniac. Shredding hardcore punk crafted in Germany by a multi-national group of people who played in such bands as Cluster Bomb Unit, Severed Head of State and others. Not really crust-core, not really d-beat but inspiration comes from that. The songs are straightforward and powerful, as well as occasionally catchy. Rants against militarism, religion, developement and even at potshot at so-called conservative punks (hell yeah…fuck 'em). The kind of album I'll keep going back to when I need a good shot of adrenalin. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

PURE HELL – *Noise Addiction* **(Welfare, CD + DVD)**
I wasn't all that familiar with this band until Mike from Welfare played me an advance CD in his car while we waiting for some unnamed (to protect the guilty) bands to get their asses to a show. Pure Hell was possibly the first all-African American punk band, coming from Philadelphia and only releasing one 7" during their existence—a fired-up cover of "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'," backed by the snotty punk of "No Rules." Not the traditional pogo punch but, rather, influenced by *Raw Power*-era Stooges in the same way that the Dead Boys were, with searing guitar lines; their sound also came from pure rock 'n' roll with a barbed-wire take on it. The two songs from the 7" plus another 13 unreleased songs all recorded in 1978. The DVD is a live, in-studio shot made to seem like a concert film, complete with dubbed-in audience cheering and applause that sounds more like an arena show than a club gig. "No Rules" and "Boots" are missing from this but it's not missing the swagger. A band with presence and power—a significant unearthing here. (58 River St., Haverhill, MA 01832, www.welfarerecords.net)

SECOND OPINION – ***Youth Revolt*** **(625, 7" EP)**
There's something youth crew-ish about this record but they also add some old-school and double-speed thrash parts. The best song is the anthemic "Fight Back." The lyrics are kind of simplistic but effectively conveyed and it's easy to get caught up in the band's enthusiasm and energy. (www.625thrash.com)

SHELL SHOCK – *Born to Kill* **(Puke N Vomit, CD)**
Kill, kill, kill and kill again. A rager from Shell Shock, who has been around for a while—I have their 2002 demo and all of those songs are on here. A boilbomb of hardcore punk—hard 'n' fast and catchy, especially the circle pit breakdown for "Declaration." One of those moments that makes me remember what I like about hardcore. Angry sentiments; it's a good way to channel the disillusionment that even middle-aged reviewers still feel—"We don't want to be like you" is still a sentiment easy to relate to. Such a simple formula and it continues to work well. After dealing with a pile of mediocre releases of late, it's good to hear an album that immediately hits me between the ears. Fucking kill(er). (PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834, www.pukenvomitrecords.com)

SICK OF TALK (Chainsaw Safety, 7" EP)
Big mosh buildups and blinding speed. Tough and pissed-off, yet it doesn't come across as tough-guy core. Kind of in the same vein as Think I Care. The sputtering lead on "Destroying" is pretty cool. My only complaint is the snare is a bit prominent in the mix, but otherwise not bad at all. (www.chainsawsafetyrecords.com)

TEEN CRUD COMBO – *Judgment Night Soundtrack Part 2* **(Deranged, LP)**
"Speedin' like a jet"—a Ruts quote from "Staring at the Rude Boys" and goddamned appropriate here. There's no let-up. These songs were recorded in 1999 and 2000; four of them were on a 7" EP and the rest are previously unreleased. Rip roarin' rock 'n' roll bringing Zeke and Motörhead to mind. That becomes apparent from the opening chords. Degenerate, depraved lyrics with a wink in the eye (gratuitous Sweet reference—eh, never mind). There's the feel of satire or smart-assedness, and besides, "Suck It" quotes WWF legends Degeneration-X… instant cred. Instant speed bomb here. (www.derangedrecords.com)

THOUGHT CRIME – *It's All In Yer Head* **(Profane Existence, LP)**
Scrappy hardcore punk rampaging with loud and fast aplomb, although some of the songs take more a mid-tempo turn. In layperson's terms, that means it kicks ass. People from Distraught and Suicidal Supermarket Trolleys—the gruff British-accented vocals stand out. Crying out for social and economic justice. And since I'm thoroughly sick and tired of all the fucking yellow ribbon and flag decals, "Celebrate the Genocide" provides a welcome critique. I'm not up for in-depth descriptions but the best recommendation I can give is it's been on my turntable since it showed up several days ago. There's something about the songs that stick with you—aggressive and angry and I can never get enough of that kind of thing. Originally released on CD on Tribal War in 2004. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

VIOLATION – *Handcuffed* **(demo tape)**
Philly Dis-fanatics including folks from Another Oppressive System. Nine ripping songs in that vein—distorted bass-lines, raw guitar, drumming that is somewhat primitive but gets the job done, along with anguished vocals. The lyrics cover slaughter, genocide, greed, oppression and other cheery subjects. Good, especially for a first effort, and it's a good-sounding pro-style tape as well. (PO Box 37271, Philadelphia, PA 19148)

VITAMIN X – *Rip It Out* **(Havoc, 7" EP)**
First new music in awhile for VX, their first with their new drummer. Maintaining the same aggressive hardcore sound—Marko's vocals cut through with authority and Marc's not averse to showing off some guitar flash. "Rock Bottom (Again)" steals from the Montrose song of the same way—I wonder how many people here know who that band was (Sammy Hagar was the vocalist, in case you were curious). Thrashin' and stompin'. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)

XBRAINIAX – *Disgrace to the Corpse of Eric Wood* **(625, 7" EP)**
31 songs on this 7". That's right—31 songs, with breaks between 'em and everything and played tightly, even slower outros to end each side. Let's break 'em down one at a time… uh, let's not. Grind/thrash/p-violence spazmania (pun intended). Got to love the sentiments expressed—"Young Republicans Fuck Off," "Bananarama Bloodbath" "Intelligent Design Is Fucking Stupid" and so many more. They must get writers cramp when making up set lists. Enough joking—yeah, it's pretty over-the-top and probably not something I'd play that much but I'll keep it around. (www.625thrash.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903 / Email: suburbanvoice@earthlink.net / Sonic Overload radio: sonicoverload.moocowrecords.com (no www) / Suburban Voice on the evil MySpace: www.myspace.com/suburbanvoice

The very thought of addressing the topic of major labels and big business within punk fills me with these feelings of wormy dread. It's a topic I'd rather just avoid. But I know that I can't; we can't. It's filling up our days and lives on a regular basis, and to ignore it is irresponsible.

As one who has dedicated my life to DIY punk, it's strange to feel so conflicted in the quagmire of such a complicated subject. I mean, it's pretty straightforward, really. Big business, major labels, and corporations are bad. Doing it yourself, building your own groundwork, your own networks, and your own sustainable passageways is good. Supporting the infrastructure and framework of independent projects is good. It's a no-brainer, as they say.

What makes it difficult is that all the lines have become blurred. What exactly is a major label these days? You have small independent labels that want to act like the big dogs, and then you have total mainstream major labels with subsidiaries and independent offshoot companies masquerading as DIY projects. Sometimes you have to read between the lines and do some research, and sometimes—no, it just sucks. It sucks that everyone is pretending to be something they are not and masquerading their backers, or fronting more than they really have.

How is it that punk has become a business? Well, because over the years the punks, the kids, the visionaries, and artists have been dedicated to taking back what should be theirs, to empowering themselves by forming their own framework, and to setting up an amazing network of independence. It has, in fact, worked so well that the big dogs had to get in on it. It's not just in punk. All companies have offshoots that are pretending to be whatever they think they need to be in order to market to a new audience. Everyone is trying to get ahead, or to make money, or to make a living. Is it all bad news? Of course not. But it is complicated, and some lines do need to be understood and drawn.

For years now we have been able to do the research on major labels and big business and the companies and corporations they are connected to, owned by, and masquerading as. Then there are the independents that are distributed by the subsidiaries of the big businesses, and on and on. Nowadays, the really big media conglomerates are all buying each other out and joining forces to make bigger mega-companies. This is happening in the business world at large, not just in music. That punk became such a true threat to the business world is actually pretty interesting. For us to realize that we are a "market" to tap into and capitalize on is enough to make you feel taken advantage of and a little bit dirty.

Over the years we have seen a rise in punk businesses. Whether they are record labels, distros, book publishing groups, record shops, infoshops, T-shirt printing co-ops, or what-have-you, we have figured out ways to make things work, to manufacture our own goods, and to be able to do whatever it is we love and make it a viable means of both sustaining the community we are involved in and keeping our bills paid. Usually this is done in a fair way to all involved. But then things always get more complicated. The one-person operation in a bedroom gets bigger, moves into a collective space, gets a few more people to help out, the labor of love becomes kind of like work, a wage needs to be paid to get the job done, then things go well, more help is needed, then maybe some taxes need to be paid cause suddenly you are on the "radar," and the hook-ups and reused materials aren't enough to sustain the operation anymore, and bills need to be paid, and costs keep rising, and the labor of love has become work, but it's still fun and rewarding and you are treating people fair, not really making any money but getting the goods out there, but that gets harder and harder to do, and costs go up, and then there is competition because other like-minded folks are doing the same kind of distros and manufacturing the same kind of products, and this is cool cause we're all in it together.

But then there are those who have a true business mind and want to make money, and whether they are equality-minded punks or business-school graduates who see an opportunity or some chain store in a mall that sees a product that will sell, who's to say where right and wrong cross paths, and who's to judge the motives?

We all can question what is and what isn't punk, and who has and who hasn't sold out, even if we don't know the factors involved in each and every situation. But then, see, you realize after all these years of playing shows in living rooms and releasing your own records and not making any money off doing so—'cause why would you, it's just about having fun, right?—suddenly you get a bit older and you have health issues that need to be addressed, and you are getting burnt out putting so much of yourself into something and being fucking exhausted all the time and coming home from tour more broke than when you left home, and now you're working a shitty job, and what if you could make some more money on tour if you played in a different venue, or what if your friends helped you to put out your records, or distro'd them while you were on the road. That would help out, right, 'cause they you would have more time to write music and play shows and you wouldn't be spending all your time folding record sleeves and waiting in line at the post office.

So it starts out that we are all friends and we help each other out and each person does their part and we all work together and over the years we form this amazing structure of alternatives that work to really fuck the system. But of course the system gets mad, and they don't want to lose out and they want a piece of the pie, too. And you've got so many people with different motives and everyone looking to get a piece of it, make their contribution and be involved, and we've been talking about "doing it yourself" and that is the thing—everyone can and is. And even if motives are good and well intended, the bills have to be paid, and what is wrong, really, with making money? Is getting paid to do what you love really so bad? So times are good and suddenly we have a lot of small businesses, all of which are pretty fucking rad, run by good people and all that. But it gets complicated. It always does. Somewhere along the line people start to get uptight about this label or that label. That legitimate thing of having to have the bank account to accept the mail order checks somehow led to the need to report all those deposits, which led to having to pay those taxes.

Or maybe you have managed to avoid that quagmire, but still some people seem to be more business-minded. Some labels are more popular than others, some run like a business and some are totally chaotic, and you wonder how it works. Those that operate more effectively have some cash and pay the bands, and you can rely on them to do what they say, and that is nice. What is so wrong with that, after all? But man, that is fucked up that so and so are now on this label that runs like a business, 'cause business isn't punk and it's not DIY right? Or is it?

At the end of the day, where do we draw our lines? What is punk and what constitutes maintaining DIY ethics? If you spend all your time being punk, making music, publishing your words and riffs, should you then have to work a totally crap job so that you can continue to be punk on your "free time"? Doesn't that feel like a compromise? Wouldn't it be more DIY to spend all of your time doing your punk stuff and not working for someone else? But if you spend all your time being punk, then punk will have to pay your bills, right? And that gets people upset 'cause you are not supposed to make money off of punk. Money is bad. If you make money you are bad, right?

Of course not. That is silly, but it opens up a can of worms. There are choices you make, ideals you hold, compromises here and there, sound judgments and control that you ultimately keep or give up somewhere along the line. I have dedicated my life to punk rock and to the DIY ethics of punk rock, but I have been known to defend a band for working with a label that I think is cool and fair, even if they are popular and well known. I have also freaked the fuck out about the out-of-touchness of package tours that are supposed to be representative of punk rock. I don't think that anything is black and white; there are shades of grey everywhere and everyone makes different decisions and choices within the same playing field. I like my favorite bands to stay small, to be appreciated by a good group of people who get it, on an intimate and personable level. But ultimately, there is a silliness to keeping something your own private secret, and just because something gets popular

doesn't mean that it's a bad thing, or that someone has sold out or compromised.

Somewhere along the line, however, when the bands are on package tours, and you are in big clubs and you don't actually see your friends anymore 'cause they are hiding out backstage somewhere, and you are no longer talking to them to set up the show, you are talking to the person who is handling the PR or setting up the tour, or whatever, somewhere along the line it gets impersonal and weird and maybe uncomfortable. Or maybe you are excited for your friends 'cause they are actually still on a DIY independent record label that is run by their friends and they are making sound choices and doing thing the same way they always have. Sometimes you have to dig a little deeper to find out the realities below the surface. And sometimes it all feels so fucking wrong and you don't even want to know because if feels like everything you care about has been raped, pillaged, and stolen from your heart and turned into a commodity to buy and sell. And what is worse than that?

So I think the reason why I squirm over the subject is that I have way too many thoughts and opinions and I have seen people do it right and do it wrong, and ultimately there is no right and wrong, but there is a lot of information to process and a lot of surfaces to scratch. I am really looking forward to the debate and conversations in this strange new time and era, where it feels like little is sacred anymore.

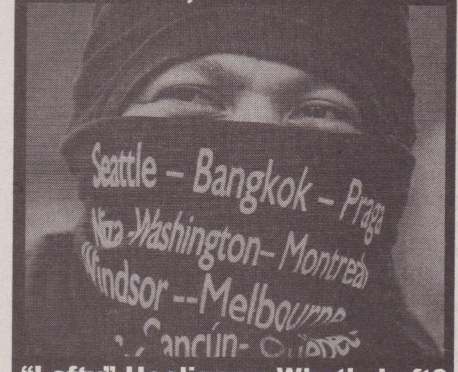
For me the bottom line comes down to a few things. The first is that we are in a new era. Punk has been around for long enough now that you really can dedicate your life to it. It is more than a trend and a passing fad. You can dedicate your life to punk and DIY ethics, and support your life within that spectrum or outside of it. It is possible to integrate and develop a sustainable lifestyle. You do not have to pick and choose, all or nothing, and quit punk to move on with life. And that is something that I like to see—older punks still involved in a diverse community that is sustainable and not just a passing rebellion phase for teenagers. And while the merits of this and that label, this and that choice, this and that company can be debated to the end of our days, the thing that I think is so important is to stay connected and keep things personal and personable. It's one thing to give up a bit of control, and it's another thing to lose touch altogether with not only what you are doing, but to the scene and the community that you are and have been involved in. I think it is the personal connections and the empowerment of us through those connections that makes the punk community so great and continually worth sustaining.

I believe in our scene, and I want to see it thrive and continue to sustain itself for as long as we can imagine. As far as major labels and big business goes, I've never been one to be able to keep track of the chain of command and ownership, and I write it all off as corrupt. I know that we can act on our conscience and do what feels right when given the choice. Keeping things within our hands, and in our control, and supporting one another as much as we can is where our potential strength and power lies. And with that in mind, we can continue to be a threat to the ugly world of business.

Hey, it's a start.

Chris(tine) • PO Box 26632 • Richmond, VA 23261-6632

Go Team, Smash State!



"Lefty" Hooligan • What's Left?

My memory of this one is pure stop motion Harryhausen *Clash of the Titans*.

It was 1992. I'd been employed at Mordam Records a little over six months. Mordam itself had been in their Folsom Street warehouse a little over a year. It was convention time, and this was the second Mordam convention at Folsom Street. Long couches had been rented, and a space opened up on the warehouse floor for the main meeting area.

I can't recall how many independent record labels Mordam had at the time. Twenty, maybe twenty-five people attended, among them several larger than life creatures from a long lost world. This is where the Harryhausen stop motion comes in. Imagine craggy claymation giants from the Bay Area punk scene—Jello Biafra, Tim Yohannan, Larry Livermore, Ruth Schwartz—all in the same room, battling it out for the future of punk rock.

The burning topic under discussion at the time, a carryover controversy from the previous year's convention, was whether Mordam should continue to distribute through Caroline. Caroline Records/ Distribution was, and is, the independent music releasing and distributing division of EMI. Ostensibly, Mordam Records had been founded as a distribution company for independent music labels that was truly independent as well of the major label music industry. In fighting about the relationship between Mordam and Caroline, that roomful of clay titans was fighting about the relationship of punk rock to the music business.

In the course of this battle no puny humans were pulped underfoot, no trains were derailed and their cars full of passengers dramatically slung about, and downtown Tokyo was not stomped flat. Instead, a business dedicated to independent DIY punk rock distribution continued its gradual slide into compromise with the music industry.

Tim's position was that Mordam had been organized to provide strength in numbers, that by getting together a large number of independent punk labels under a single roof, Mordam could exercise power, not just in collecting money from stores and distributors, but also in exerting punk's DIY/anti-major label principles against the music industry. He favored putting punk rock politics first, cutting off Caroline, selling directly to mom-and-pop record stores, and accepting a loss in sales if need be. Larry and Jello took the opposite position and contended that what was important was getting the music out to "the kids" as widely as possible, no matter what. Jello in particular pushed an almost mystical faith in punk rock music to affect the lives of young people, insisting that if even one kid somewhere in the Midwest managed to discover a Dead Kennedys record in some mall and become a punk rocker, it was worth selling to Caroline. That this stance coincided with maximizing sales, and profits, did not escape Tim Yo. If I'm not mistaken, Maximum Rocknroll's famous "Major Label Issue" was Tim's direct response to the Caroline controversy, a shot across the bow of folks he'd once considered punk rock compatriots warning them that they weren't taking the fight against the major label music industry seriously enough.

Ruth cagily played both sides of the fence during that battle, bringing up Tim's points to Larry and Jello, and raising Larry's and Jello's concerns to Tim, all the while insisting that whatever Mordam's labels decided to do, she would do. Kind of like Junior Bush saying he'll go along with whatever Congress wants to do, knowing full well that his Republican Party controls both the House and the Senate. As a consequence, Mordam increased direct store sales but never did anything about Caroline. Mordam's rules for dealing with major labels continued to loosen until, finally, Ruth partnered with the Warner/Elektra/Atlantic Corporation (WEA) upon her sale of Mordam Records to Lumberjack Distribution in 2004.

I sided with Tim at the time. In hindsight of course, I realize that Tim's position didn't ever challenge capitalism as such, but merely favored the small-scale capitalism of individual entrepreneurs and mom-and-pop businesses over the monopoly capitalism of giant international corporations. Marx clearly understood, and Tim Yo completely agreed, that small-scale capitalism inevitably evolves into global monopoly capitalism through a boom-and-bust cycle that encourages consolidation and eliminates competition. Tim's position was thus tactical, a realistic approach to advancing his more socialistic politics. He had no intention of merely humanizing the face of the capitalist music industry with punk DIY ethics. That said, for a Communist, Tim had a genius for creating successful, small-scale capitalist enterprises, MRR and 924 Gilman Street being the most striking examples.

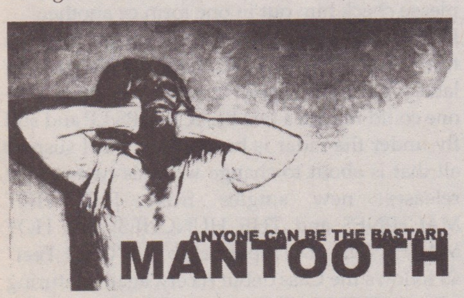
Next column, if I'm sufficiently inspired, I'll discuss whether Tim Yo's DIY/anti-major label punk politics have any significance for today. Now, let me restate my point. Small-scale DIY punk capitalism inevitably evolves into monopoly music industry capitalism, given enough time and money. If the whole music business had consisted entirely of small DIY enterprises

like Alternative Tentacles, Mordam Records, Lookout Records, and Maximum Rocknroll in their heyday, market forces would eventually bring punk versions of Sony and Time-Warner into being.

I think a number of arguments can be advanced that small-scale capitalism is preferable to global monopoly capitalism. It's more personal and responsive, it employs and supports the local community, it can be innovative and empowering, it has less of an impact on the environment. To date however, no one has figured out how to keep small-scale capitalism small. It always seems to grow into impersonal, unresponsive international corporate capitalism that stifles competition and innovation, that immiserates labor and destroys community, and that spreads like a cancer around the planet to devastate the environment worldwide. There have been numerous proposals for keeping capitalism a manageable size, such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's mutualism, Ralph Borsodi's homesteading, G.K. Chesterton's distributism, and E.F Schumacher's Gandhian economics. In a certain light, even National Socialist economics might be considered a half-assed effort to retain shopkeeper capitalism in an industrial age, what some at the time derisively called "shopkeeper socialism." What has prevailed is what we have today.

So, whatever the merits of DIY/anti-major label punk rock, it doesn't go beyond capitalism in any significant way. That's ground zero for any meaningful dialogue on the subject. Do feasible alternatives to capitalism exist? If the answer to the question is yes, then the discussion becomes whether an updated version of Tim Yohannan's DIY/anti-major label politics has any relevance in attaining those alternatives for punk rock today. Only if the answer to the original question is no should we fall back to a debate of whether such punk politics can reasonably be expected to put a human face on the global monopoly capitalism of the corporate music industry.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.



This month I'd like to slow things down a bit and address a few issues that my bosses over at the MRR mansion have asked for my expert advice regarding. I tried to reason with them, telling them that I am no expert on "issues" and "problems," but Golnar and Paul seemed pretty confide nt in my ability to produce a fine piece of prose commenting on the punk rock omniverse and the "business ethics" thereof.

My apologies to the staff, but my initial response to the phrase "punk business" pulled forth from my gullet a mighty scoff that disturbed many library patrons. I was politely asked to leave and I kicked over many shelves of books in a rebellious punk rock fashion as I exited the premises.

I'm not sure why, but these days people seem to have an obsession with qualifying anything they do with "punk." "I'm a bike punk," or "I'm a chef punk," or "I'm a NASCAR punk" or "I'm a punk homeowner." The latter was actually the subject of an article written for the *Pittsburgh City Paper* a while back, which elicited a similar scoffing reaction. Why can't you just be a homeowner? Why can't you just be a NASCAR fan? Why can't you just be a bicyclist? What, besides the year being 1977, was so punk about my parents buying a house when they got out of high school? I mean, hell, they "did it themselves."

It seems to me that the people most prone to this kind of OCD-type labeling of themselves are pretty much the least likely candidates for the title "punk." By that I mean they rarely go to DIY punk shows, buy DIY punk records, or perform any function that supports the DIY punk community other than regularly update their Myspace page about how cool punk-NASCAR is and/or how neat punk-owning a house is. And this is fine. Just fine. Really, I don't think there is any problem with no longer (or ever) being involved with punk. Things change. People's interest wane. It's really OK if you're not punk anymore. My mom doesn't really get upset when I tell her she's not punk and she's more "DIY" than most punks I know. She's poor, often does not pay her bills, and does not drive a car. She is very much an independent woman. But when you finally do drop the "I'm still punk" shtick, please do not pick up the "I'm not punk anymore" one because that's probably more annoying.

I can hear it now. "Oh, I used to be punk until Mantooth set up all these fuckin' rules."

Well, not really. The only thing I've listened to this past week has been power violence and Slade. Anyway…

I'm squirming in my seat right now because I haven't even spewed out 500 words and half of them are loaded. "Punk." "Community." "Independent." "DIY." "Power violence." "Myspace." They're all grey areas as far as I'm concerned, and they don't get any less obscured when you start to analyze them in regards to *business*, whether it's record shops or record labels. So I'm a little uncomfortable throwing these terms around without putting them in quotations to let the reader know that I am trying to be sarcastic, disavowing any responsibility to define or clarify the terms. When pressed for details, my immediate reaction is most often a defensive and surly "who gives a shit?"

Most of the time, it is not I who gives a shit. Until I start to think about bands or labels I don't give a shit about but hear about from the fucking wieners I work with at The Gap. *Paint It Black. Jade Tree. Against Me. Fat Wreck Chords. Das Oath. Dim Mak.* I'll just cut straight to the point and say that these bands and labels aren't worth their own weight in black, oily diarrhea. They are not "punk." They are not "DIY." They are not, in any sense, related to the words "independent," "community," or "power violence." The only thing I've mentioned in this column that these bands could relate to would be Myspace.

I doubt any of these people read *MRR*, let alone my bullshit column, but if they do, they're probably wondering what they did to warrant such a comparison. Because fucking wieners at The Gap know who you are. Fucking wieners that work at The Gap who come into my stock room and try to get me to stop listening to Dystopia talk about how they don't even like money. Fucking wieners at The Gap insist that I listen to so and so because it's some sick and brutal stuff, but really it just sounds like Pantera. Fucking wieners at The Gap insist that so and so are a sweet punk band, but really it just sounds like the musical equivalent of falling asleep while jerking off.

And I guess that's what it comes down to: falling asleep while jerking off. This is the yardstick I hold up to most bands or labels I encounter nowadays. Nodding off mid-wank is probably one of the saddest and pathetic acts a human being is capable of performing. Just think about it for a second; you're so bored with yourself that you can't even stay awake long enough to orgasm. Masturbation is fairly simple and you can't even do that right. Why did you even bother starting?

Bands like Das Oath and Paint It Black are easy targets because, to some people, it's obvious that these "groups" (who perform at "concerts" and not "shows") are comprised of molded feces in the borrowed shape of humans. They use the DIY network as a stepping-stone leading them to the sound tracks of video games and/or The Warped Tour. But when all else fails, they can always rely on that DIY network again and show the kids that they truly do care. Quite frankly, I don't think punk needs to be concerned with big business using mohawks, leather jackets, or the word "Oi!" to sell chocolate chip cookies, but assholes with street teams trying to sell overpriced bullshit guised as "DIY" at the expense of hard working individuals toiling in the bowels of punk rock—not to make money or a name for themselves, but because they genuinely enjoy putting out records, setting up shows, driving bands around the country to poorly attended basement shows, etc., etc.

Admittedly, it's easy for me to run my mouth about these bands and labels because they don't affect my life in any way. And really, for the most part, these bands, labels, distributors, and whatnot really *don't* affect the way most of DIY punk "does business." I saw Terminal State a few weeks ago and no group of clean-cut, promo-shoot punks waltzed in and demanded we empty our coffers into their limousines. But then again, more grey areas: what about a band like Municipal Waste? CD on Earache, LP on Six Weeks.

It's shitty. It's even shittier when their bio reads like one posted on Dim Mak's website. It's shitty that they even have a bio.

But for some reason it doesn't bother me. It doesn't bother me that they've played and will continue to play at The Mr. Roboto Project here in Pittsburgh. It should, perhaps. But there is something markedly different in the atmosphere of a Municipal Waste show in comparison to some fucking bullshit Jade Tree showcase. I've been to both on several occasions. The latter feels like I'm on the set of an infomercial for all the coolest "punk" bands and Tony Little is going to hop out on stage at any moment waving a Some Girls flag and trying to sell the audience Against Me! kitchenware. It feels like everyone is trying to sell me something. Whether it's some glittery merchandise or some vague aesthetic of legitimacy. I don't get that when I go see Municipal Waste. Maybe it's because half the time Tony is dressed up like a wizard or they forget to even bring merch, but I never feel like I'm being forced to watch people fall asleep while jerking off and call it punk.

So I guess that makes me a hypocrite? After all, The Gap does fund my punk rock lifestyle/deathstyle.

ENDNOTES:

Das Oath creates a sound that no other band comes up with in the world of loud music. They've not only fucked with punk's status quo artistically but have expanded and championed upon the very best of hardcore and punk.—Dim Mak website

Armed with the largesse of experience, the band isn't afraid to dispose with the guarded irony and get with the threatening urgency of a beautifully written "fuck you" song. Musically, Paint it Black draws more on traditional, aggro forebears, twisting it all rock-ready for the 2003 and beyond. —Jade Tree website

Q: Is there such a thing as a "punk" business?

A: Who cares, as long as that business does the right thing.

The honchos here at MRR have tapped us columnists to expound on the always-changing ethical ideals of business in the world of punk rock. "Mitch Cardwell" and "punk business ethics" aren't mentioned in the same sentence all that often. In light of this, I'm gonna go with the usual madman vinyl hound shtick I've managed to bore 99.9% of *MRR* readers with for the past couple of years. $orry.

This month, I'm going to attempt to regain your trust by returning to the overwhelming glut of small press European releases for you to pick or pan. We inevitably begin with the latest vinyl rush from Yakisakana Records, a label always worth paying a fair amount of attention to. The pick of the litter this time around has to be the first non-7" effort by France's newly christened kings, the FATALS. You might recall the panic that I was thrown in when this band initially burst on the scene. Their first 7" EP was hailed by many as the second coming and lil' ol' me couldn't find one! Well, I managed to worm a copy of this and all that followed, and although mildly impressed, I was left wondering what the big fucking deal was. I even saw the fucking band play last year in Chicago and was not nearly as thrilled as I was (apparently) supposed to be. Well, their new *Treat Me Bad* 10" EP is something different all together. I think the FATALS have successfully managed to blend their particular (and *heavy*) brand of noise with the energy they had when I saw them. The tunes themselves aren't earth-shattering, but the delivery and sheer destruction of them is what makes this release so fucking good. Granted, this has to be the noisiest outing thus far for the FATALS, but it totally tipped the scales in their favor for me. Maybe that's just what I was after. Regardless, this is easily one of the most abrasive listens I've had in a while, so if you're in dire need of an ear splitting, look no further.

The Blue Demon Vs. El Santo is the second 7" EP by LOS RAW GOSPELS, a band notable for sharing a member with the fantastic BLACK TIME. Although there are a few similarities between the two bands, the GOSPELS go for a more traditional muddy Euro punk stomp and leave the piercing to their superior big-brother group. There is so much of this stuff coming out of Euroland these days and it takes a little more than a Bongout sleeve to get the full thumbs up. That said, I still bought a copy. I have no self-control.

The *Horror Chalet* 7" EP is one of two new singles by France's MAGNETIX. I really enjoyed their 10" EP from a year or so back and managed to hear these tracks on a slew of demos sent to me by a party who will remain nameless…so I've been digging on this crap for a while. For the unaware, MAGNETIX specializes in primo two-piece punk that doesn't rely on a single blues leaning to get the point across. There's even a tad of wave in there, although I can't pinpoint exactly which one. They're French and mysterious…leave it at that. Their other new single—"Time After Time" b/w "Fiend Of Time"—is on the FATALS-operated Nasty Product label. I offer no tips on which one you should buy for "collecting purposes" because I don't give a goddamn how good your collection is. Ask Ryan Wells or something.

From Yakisakana, we move to Big Black Hole Records. Aesthetically, there is virtually no way to tell these two labels apart. Both have a penchant for punk of the obscuro-Euro school and both apparently can't get enough of those eye-popping screened sleeves. Their first new offering is a 7" EP by 3 DELICIAS, who are a bass-less band that likes to wear their own band T-shirts while "action-posing" for the cover of their 7" sleeves. I reviewed this EP this month, so check that section for the lowdown. My guess is that the Big Black Hole release that will command the most attention this time around will be the *She Keeps Me Shut* 7" EP from Arizona's TOKYO ELECTRON. Pressed in celebration of their recent Euro tour, it took quite a while for these to make their way to the US in amounts suitable for distro, but that time is here *now*. As JAY REATARD's liner notes clearly state, ELECTRON main man RYAN WONG crafts some of the most instantly catchy punk today, and TOKYO ELECTRON is easily his most accessible and prolific band in the past few years. As their recent album suggests, TOKYO ELECTRON is not a demo project that is simply tinkered with in the lush, air-conditioned palaces one would assume Ryan operates out of. This is a real band that knows exactly how to get us dorks going. Like all their other releases, consider *She Keeps Me Shut* an essential purchase.

Holy Cobra Society is a Spanish label (again) specializing in elaborately packaged, limited releases. Their most recent record happens to be their best thus far, pairing an unknown (at least to me) Spanish band, LE JONATHAN REILLY with one of my very favorite current bands, Chicago's TYRADES! It's been far too long since we had a new release out of the TYRADES and I must say that they've kept their string of greatness going with their three song showing here. They offer up two new originals and a Tyradized cover of THE BLACK LIPS! Yes, I was drooling. But what of this LE JONATHAN REILLY? Surprisingly, they hold their own against the bigger name on the flip, checking in with three tunes reminiscent of POPULAR SHAPES' speedy, arty punk. An LP is rumored to be coming soon courtesy of Holy Cobra Society, and I can't wait to hear more outta these guys.

I'm no stranger to SKIP JENSEN. His name can be found throughout my record collection, being an integral part of bands like STACK O'LEES, DEMON'S CLAWS and my much-loved SCAT RAG BOOSTERS. His one man band records, credited to SKIP JENSEN AND HIS SHAKIN' FEET, never really got me going before, but that has changed with *Abscond*, his debut LP released on Demolition Derby (CD on Delta Pop). Like his infrequent co-conspirator BBQ, Skip relies much more on actual song quality than the gimmicky bashing far too many OMBs fall prey to. *Abscond* perfectly illustrates this. It's a blues-soaked haunt fest that stomps only when it needs to, rather than out of necessity. This guy is too good to continue ignoring, so please check him out in one form or another.

Dusty Medical Records, run by one of the fellas from THE MISTREATERS, is quickly becoming a label worthy an obsessive following. How anyone could release a live BLACK LIPS LP and still fly under the radar is beyond me, but I suspect all that is about to change with his two newest releases: new singles from THE HOT MACHINES and THE HUNCHES! The HOT MACHINES' "Microphone" b/w "Can't Feel" 45 follows the Cass debut nicely, again featuring a Jared (THE PONYS) tune on side A and one by MISS ALEX WHITE on the flip. These recordings are close to three years old and who knows how much more are floating around, but there are no complaints outta me. Keep 'em coming! The

HUNCHES' single, "Leper Parade" b/w "Pinwheel Spins (live)", only strengthens their position as of the very best bands going today. They've yet to make a false move. Get both of these or cry forever.

No one has been more dedicated to the preservation of the trashy aesthetic (specifically the South City/Shitty and Pacific NW garage punk varieties) more than Boom Boom Records Of Renton and label boss Melvin. Every release is simultaneously low-brow and over the top, but from THE FLYING DUTCHMEN to THE SULTANAS, there's no denying his lovesick obsession with all things trashy. His latest band, FE FI FO FUMS, just released their debut LP, *Shake All Night*. For the full scoop on this one, you can check out my review in this very issue, but make no mistake: Melvin's gone PUNK! Visit www.boom-boom.net and don't miss out, as this a certain to be one of the year's best albums.

This month also marks the return of Die Slaughterhaus Records! Fittingly, they've resurrected another MIA act of punk's recent past, Canada's CPC GANGBANGS! This oft-referenced, seldom-heard combo appears to finally moving at full steam with an upcoming LP on Swami! But what of this new single? It's just about the best pure punk 7" I've heard in 2006 thus far. This is absolutely chilling, *raw* punk, that's all there is to it. I take everything I said about their live show back! Honest! I can't fucking wait to hear their LP! Should I mention that this single is limited *and* has a couple of different sleeve variations? Nah…

X! Recordings seems to have taken the seat vacated by Tom Perkins Productions, releasing material by some of the best new bands outta Michigan. First was the excellent debut 7" from FRUSTRATIONS from last year and now another debut from the highly touted TERRIBLE TWOS, "Plunder Ball" b/w "Spitting Image." Not surprisingly, it's a great fucking debut. TERRIBLE TWOS have a sound that appears to be directly linked to the madness that swirled around bands like CLONE DEFECTS and PIRANHAS a couple of years ago. I'm not saying they are aping either act, but it sounds familiar when placed alongside those two bands. If you know anything about my taste, that's about as high a recommendation as I could possibly give. I intend to purchase any X! release I see and I suggest you do the same.

THE FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS emerged around the same time I started doing this column, and I don't think I've missed an opportunity to sing their praises here. When I first heard them, they came off as a band clearly influenced by *Killed By Death* stuff, but with slight hints toward experimentation. With each new release, the band seemed to get further and further out there, moving away the KBD stuff and, I dunno, doing their own thang. The shift was most abrupt (and totally obvious after their singer left) with the Wrench Records 7", which seemed to leave a lot of folks scratching their heads wondering what the fuck they were doing. Well, shit-fer-brains, let me fucking tell you. They got rougher, dirtier and a whole lot weirder. Take your head out of your ass! If you are one of the folks in the dark, I suspect/hope you'll be completely won over by *The Severed Tongue Speaks For Everyone*, their new album, released on Criminal IQ Records. Why? Because it doesn't sound like anything else around right now, that's why! It's screaming, gnashing, noisy, skronky punk that isn't afraid to change directions completely from one song to the next, or even mid-song. If you want angular spazz or blistering borderline hardcore, chances are you'll hear all that and more in any given tune on this LP. It's really one of those records you can truly dive into and who the fuck *doesn't* want that out of an album?

Late last month I caught wind of the debut by HOME BLITZ, the self-released *Apocalyptic Grades 2005 A.D.7"*EP. I mean c'mon, if I read about a remotely punkish 200-press 7", I'm at least gonna investigate *a little*. Anyway, what I got was one of the most interesting and rewarding DIY EPs in ages. HOME BLITZ plays a bombastic brand of pop that verges on collapse every second. Actually, it does collapse a couple of times. And that only strengthens my opinion of it! I hesitate to chalk it all up to charming ineptness because (A) that would be cheating and (B) it's clear that Home Blitz knows exactly what they are doing. All I know is I can't stop spinning this fucking single.

Can I make it through this column without mentioning how fucking great the new CUTS album is? Nope, guess not! Too bad punkeroos!

Mitch Cardwell / PO Box 23882 / Oakland, CA 94623 / USA

In one of the great deceptive maneuvers in US history," Bob Herbert wrote recently, "the military-industrial complex (with George W. Bush and Dick Cheney as chairman and CEO, respectively) took its eye off the real enemy in Afghanistan and launched the pointless but far more remunerative war in Iraq." Herbert, one of the *New York Times'* better pundits, ought to know better than to point to Afghanistan as the right fight at the right time. But he's not the only Pollyanna of America's other dirty war.

During his 2004 presidential primary campaign Howard Dean said: "Our military has done an absolutely terrific job in Afghanistan, which is a war I supported...I believe that, had Saddam been captured earlier, we might have been able to spend more time looking for Osama bin Laden, which is the real problem." John Kerry took the same position—Afghanistan war good/part of war on terror, Iraq war bad/distraction—in his run against Bush.

And so has the citizenry. Public disgust for the Iraq War, news coverage of which has been dominated by soaring body counts, torture scandals and the outbreak of civil war, has become bipartisan—only 30 percent of Americans tell the February 27 CBS News poll that they still support it.

The popularity of the occupation of Afghanistan, on the other hand, is a given. The US military backing of Afghan president Hamid Karzai is so widely accepted that pollsters no longer ask voters about it. Opposition? There isn't any.

Liberal magazines like *The Nation* and *The Progressive*, the Air America radio network and the lefty blogosphere are packed with ferocious insults and attacks on the Bush Administration about the Iraq War, from how they conned us into it to their lack of postwar strategic planning to the profiteering and looting that ensued. But when Afghanistan makes one of its rare appearances in the lefty media, it's invariably held up as the war Bush ought to be fighting, the good war that got sidetracked when we went into Iraq.

Everyone loves Bush's war against Afghanistan, even though it was based on just as many lies as his assault on Iraq: Osama bin Laden probably wasn't in Afghanistan on 9/11 and was certainly not there by the time bombs began falling. People approve even though, as in Iraq, Bush didn't send enough troops—8,000 where 500,000 were required—to provide basic security. Even though Afghans didn't greet us as liberators. Even though, as in Iraq, he installed a government composed of corrupt, violent and vengeful minorities, guaranteeing sectarian bloodshed and civil war.

And even though the news from US-occupied Afghanistan—if you can find any—is as relentlessly bleak as that from Iraq. Afghanistan suffers its own litany of roadside bombs, suicide bombs, massacres of foreign aid workers, citizens terrorized by kidnappers and rapists. It even has its own Abu Ghraib.

US troops are jailing, torturing, and occasionally murdering about 500 uncharged (and therefore legally innocent) inmates at a top-secret makeshift concentration camp at a disused Soviet-era machine shop at Bagram, about 40 miles south of Kabul. "Some of the detainees," reports the *New York Times*, "have already been held at Bagram for as long as two or three years." The paper says that the Bagram camp is, "In many ways rougher and more bleak" than the notorious US gulag at Guantánamo. "Men are held by the dozen in large wire cages...sleeping on the floor on foam mats and, until about a year ago, often using plastic buckets for latrines." And if Abu Ghraib serves as a guide, check out what Army interrogator and self-admitted prisoner abuser Anthony Lagouranis says about *those* "terrorists": "90 percent of them were probably innocent."

American soldiers, intelligence officers and private contract torturers subject their victims to solitary confinement and sleep deprivation. Military officials confirm that their goons have hung Afghans by their arms from the ceilings of their cages, threatened them with attack dogs, and beaten them to death. Claims that the torture has recently eased up are cast in doubt by the

Pentagon's refusal to allow prisoners visits by lawyers or relatives. Defense Department officials aren't even as civilized as the Nazis, who permitted the Red Cross to inspect their POW camps during World War II. Under such circumstances, a reasonable observer must assume the worst.

It's widely accepted that the torture at Abu Ghraib, combined with US troops' rough and intimidating treatment of civilians on streets and in their homes, motivates Iraqis to join, fund and provide logistical support to a growing resistance movement. Now we know that the same thing is going on in Afghanistan. When will American public opinion catch up with reality?

Both wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan, are equally unjustifiable, illegal, corrupt and unwinnable. Both make us less humane and less safe. Anti-Iraq War liberals who have given the Administration a free pass on Afghanistan have merely encouraged more abuse. "For some reason," a senior Bush official marvels to the *Times*, "people did not have a problem with Bagram. It was in Afghanistan."

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NEW BOOK: *Attitude 3: The New Subversive Online Cartoonists* (NBM Publishing, 128 pp, $13.95), comes out next month. You can preorder the book at any bookstore or comics shop, or on the internet. It includes cartoons by and interviews with 21 amazing web-cartoonists, some political and others hilarious. *Attitude 3* is a great primer on the sometimes-perplexing world of web-cartoons and shows an amazing range of artistic creativity.

Bottle of Wine

Standing outside my new apartment on Grove Street, looking at the water cascade down the stone steps from the front door to the sidewalk, listening to the thunder growl overhead in the pitch-black night. It's another winter rainstorm in San Francisco.

I'm reminded of standing at the top of another set of stairs, looking down.

I was at James and Megan's apartment, in Cambridge near Central Square, before the neighborhood became too expensive for anyone except yuppies and wealthy liberals.

Lucy Parson's (Boston's radical collective bookstore) was still on Mass. Ave. next to the donut shop, clustered with other small odds-and-ends shops on the corner. Now, in its place at the corner of Prospect St. there is a bank, a cell phone store, and luxury condos all made of matching red brick.

It was sometime in the '90s, when we still went to shows at the Rat in Kenmore Square, and shared cheap plastic pitchers of "rat brew" (piss mixed with stale Pabst for all we knew) even though we were underage. It was in the days when James and I started my first band, the Fuck Tubes. The group was all women (except for James) and the name was like the female version of the Sex Pistols. Er, get it?

It was back when we all wore our leather jackets, because we were Punk. The front of my jacket had yellow and black stripes painted down the inside seam of the zipper, and the Mickey's Malt Liquor Fighting Bee was painted in exacting detail on the back.

Over time the paint chipped away, but you could still see the mischievous look in that bee's eye, and the rest of the back of the jacket was covered in pyramid spikes. On the bottom of the back I had painted "The Freeze" in red letters. Because, of course, I was a Boston Punk. Fuck ya.

We had been hanging out and drinking all night, in James and Meagan's small apartment, talking about everything. Arguing about politics and absurdist anarchist logic, getting into each other's faces and laughing and being ourselves. Listening to mix tapes that had been played so many times the sound was going fuzzy.

We drank bottles of cheap wine Meagan had found somewhere, until Gretchen started up our drunken sailor's anthem, "Bottle of wine…fruit of the vine…when ya gonna let me start over?"

And we would all join in and cause a racket of noise just because we felt like it, because that's what the night called for. We celebrated the moment and being together and spitting at the world.

The night wore on, and for some reason, I found myself, paused.

Standing at the top of those lovely stairs covered in red beat down carpet, steps marching in a long straight line down from the second floor to the first.

I wasn't entirely wasted, because I remember this moment clearly, as if I was there now. Wearing my torn black stockings, safety pins holding the spider web together around my legs. Also my favorite wool kilt, and tall black boots that were cracking at the seams, with thick yellow laces from the hardware store.

Standing there at the top of the stairs, I considered life and the moment. I looked down the rectangular expanse of space, from the second floor to the first.

And then, a moment later, I dared myself.

I leaned forward past the point of no return, and fell headfirst into air. I flew for a brief moment, sailing downwards—then landed hard in a pile at the bottom, smashed and bruised.

James saw that I wasn't seriously hurt, and then laughed at my daring-do. I rubbed my bumped head and skinned knees and couldn't help but laugh as well.

"What the hell did you do that for?" he asked.

Not knowing how else to explain, I just said, "Sometimes, you just have to let go."

The Profits

It's 1999, and one of the Profits' first shows, at Jacque's, Boston's oldest drag queen bar, in the dark and smoke-filled basement.

The walls were still painted leopard print and old black-and-white photos were pasted above the bar. Nothing had changed since the '70s, and you could almost smell the leather jackets of past rockers and the hairspray of queens, and definitely feel the leftover nefarious energy that old underground clubs and spaces carry.

Although upstairs had bright lights and a glittery stage for the regular drag queen show, the basement was in shambles. That's why the owner let us put on punk shows there. It was dark because most of the light bulbs had burned out, and before every show the bands had to find bits of cable to patch together the ancient PA.

It was my birthday, so I had decided to wear a bright yellow vintage dress that I found at a thrift store. The dress was the score of the century, a garment like none other, with hundreds of yellow and gold glass beads sewn on every inch from the hem to the collar, creating patterns of swirls around my body.

As we played my guitar strap ripped the beads off my shoulder, and I could see sparkles on the dirty floor.

We were a mess, mostly playing together, and I just screamed as loud as I could and tried to remember the words and how the songs went on guitar. Adam told jokes and threw plastic army men at people, and everything was chaos as we were as drunk as everyone else in the place.

Sean started up a pit, and our other friends joined in, the small space between the band and the bar becoming soaked with thrown and spilled beer, and the energy of friends and punks running around being silly.

Amy and Gretchen tackled me mid-song, and I crashed backwards onto the wooden floor of the tiny stage, both women on top of me, a tangle of arms and legs and cords.

Somehow I got back up, still screaming in a sparkled-covered dress, and we continued on with the song, playing our set until the bouncer turned on the lights, yelled at us to stop and for everyone to go the fuck home.

Five years later, after what feels like a million more stories of tour and shows and friends and nights of laughter and pain and everything in between, I found myself still holding that same guitar.

I was halfway across the country, standing on a tall wooden platform on a street in Minneapolis—older and more serious, getting ready to play again.

From the height of the stage I had a good view of the tree-lined street, the rows of narrow houses, and the people sitting on their stoops, curiously watching us.

On the grass in the park across the street, families ate barbeque and lazily enjoyed the day before the night's firework display. Kids swarmed the nearby playground and an ice cream truck on the corner sold Rockets and orange Push-Ups.

Punks in black with patches and spikes and mohawks and bright red hair wandered over from the massive annual Minneapolis Punk Picnic a few blocks away, beers in hand, and peo-

ple started to gather in the street in front of the stage.

The Widget Corps had organized the day of performances and an open mic in this working class neighborhood by the park as a radical fun alternative to all of the patriotic crap of July 4th (the US national holiday celebrating our independence from England, and the sale of tiny American flags you can attach to your car), and I was excited to play.

I looked out on the peaceful neighborhood scene, as Adam, Jim, Brian, and I all squeezed together on the small stage, all tuned up and ready to play. As usual, I thought I should open my big mouth before we got started, and ranted about what pisses me off the most—the crushing exploitation of the millions for the extreme wealth of a minute few.

A black woman sitting on her porch smiled. It seemed obvious to her that this government doesn't give a damn about anyone.

And then we launched into our first song, inspired by a book by Noam Chomsky, "Profit Over People."

It was a glorious blue-sky day, and I felt so happy to be outside, making music, surrounded by our friends—the Misery, Profane, and CLITfest crew and all the Minneapolis punks—and a crowd of people who had probably never even heard of the Ramones.

The punks and a few of the young kids from the playground danced, and the band played the songs we had played together a thousand times before. And by the end Jim, Adam, Brian, and I were all smiling and worn out, and I remembered why I love being in a punk band.

This was one of the Profits last shows, although at the time none of us wanted to really think about it, but already things had changed. A few months later we stopped booking shows, and I began traveling again.

It took some time for the feeling of being punched in the stomach to go away every time I heard one of our songs, or someone asked me when we were going to play next.

I am proud of what we accomplished together—five tours, a full length CD, three 7"s, a CD discography, and about two hundred and fifty shows in basements and punk clubs across the US and Europe.

Our last show with the original line-up (with Rich on drums) was at the Lobusch in Hamburg, and I can honestly say that was one of my favorite shows I've ever played.

I'm so glad we went out having fun, telling the greedy bastards to fuck off and say, "Cheers to everyone who fights for a better world!"

I mention all of this about the Profits here in my column because I want to say a huge heartfelt "thanks" to everyone who let us sleep on your floor, set up a show for us, fed us, sent us cheerful emails and letters, and bought our records so we could put out the next one.

I wish I could give a huge hug to all of the great friends who supported us over the years, and had fun with us at the shows. That's what it was all about—friends making music, friends having fun, dancing and screaming against the world.

It was painful to break up, and it has taken time for me to be here, standing again at the top of the stairs. I see the rain trickle down, listen to the thunder in San Francisco, and it feels so clear, this moment.

Sometimes, I realize, we need to just let go—even of the things we love.

And then we find ourselves, maybe broken and bruised, but still alive, once again traveling into the unknown future.

End Story: The Other Day

I really shouldn't have smoked that joint Wyatt handed me. I get so stoned from California pot I feel like I'm in high school again.

The show at 58 Tehama was really a blast, one of those nights when everything seems right, and after months of flirting and making out, I totally fell in love with San Francisco punk.

First off, I had no idea where 58 Tehama was. It could have been in San Jose for all I knew. But I looked it up on my map, and from the flyer I knew it was between 1st and 2nd Streets, and Fulton and Harrison.

I decided to take my bike, and fuck waiting for the bus, my motto for the last month. Now that I finally have some sense of where I'm going, I love biking here, every day finding new ways to get somewhere, figuring out how the streets and hills and neighborhoods fit together.

It is also refreshing to see so many other people biking, on all types of bikes, similar to many European cities. It's not unusual to be at a stoplight during the day and have to wait with five or six other bikers for the traffic to clear.

Thinking about the best way to get to the show, I remembered reading something from a SF bike messenger's blog (that I found by accident during a Google search), "We bombed down the timed lights of Golden Gate, and then crossed Market..."

It sounded like a good route, and I was going from about the same place, the Panhandle by Golden Gate Park, to downtown.

Golden Gate was glorious and fast, and I was getting used to trusting my breaks with my life, speeding down steep hills, while watching ahead for cross traffic at the stop signs.

Downtown, I found the back street of Tehama, and saw punks on the sidewalk and knew I was in the right place.

"58 Tehama" turned out to be the address for a DIY loft/artist/warehouse space, a nice surprise. The people living there had built a wooden stage at one end of the main room, a fairly large and open rectangular space, and a good size for a punk show. I walked in and, for the first time since I've been here, felt right at home.

The show also surprised me by starting on time. Imagine that! Since I arrived an hour late, I was disappointed to miss Golnar and Chris's band MODERN PROBLEMS and Mike's band SAHN MARU, as I've only heard good things about both.

VÖETSEK was kick-ass as usual, Amy screaming to a background of metal thrash punk that started a fun pit; every time I see them, I like them even more.

I wandered around the space, smoking too many cigarettes, talking to Mike, Wyatt, and Will, then met a young punk named Kat who has the best spikes on a jacket I've possibly ever seen. She walked with me to the liquor store down the street and I bought two bottles of Sierra Nevada and she bought a small bottle of Jack.

SCURVY DOGS played next, and as I said last month—rocked!

DIRECT CONTROL plays what many describe as "classic Boston Hardcore style" which, being from Boston, and having seen too many terrible "classic Boston Hardcore bands," immediately put me off. But it turned out they are more original and fresh than the description implies. I liked them a lot, and you could tell they were having fun on stage.

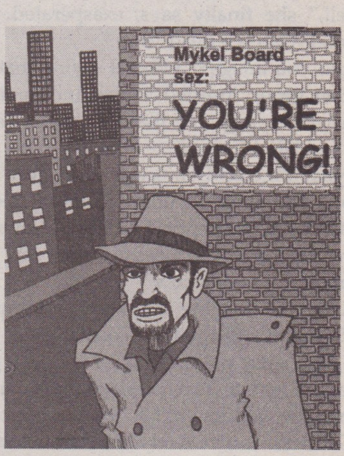
Then STRUNG UP played, a band from the Bay Area that has been around for some time, but I hadn't heard any of their records or seen them play before. All I can say is, they totally blew me away. The music hit me, as it did everyone else who was up front watching, and I couldn't stop smiling. It brought me back to the beginning, and reminded me why I love hardcore and punk and going to shows.

After the show, as stoned as I was in my mom's house in Murfreesboro, smoking out the window and lighting incense, all I wanted in the world was to ride my bike.

The ride home was glorious, and I cruised down Market at 1 a.m., the streets a quiet sigh of relief from the busy traffic during the day. Only a few cabs and a few cars on the road. The road was sleek and wet from the rain earlier, making for a fast ride. My legs finally kicked in, free of all the congestion and traffic, and I could just cruise.

Thanks again to everyone who has made me feel at home here in SF. Cheers and thanks to the *MRR* gang for always being rad, and a big shout out to Boston's La Rivolta crew!

Solidarity and blazing guitars, Erika
(e_bitchcrew@yahoo.com)



We shall never be at peace until everything has been said, once and for all time; then there will be silence and one will no longer be afraid of being silent. It will be all right then.

—Celine

Things move too fast. I wanted to write about my adventures in Florida. Then the Washington shit hits the Washington fan. By the time you read this, there'll be two or three scandals I haven't even imagined. I'll talk about two of 'em

before I get to Florida.

The first is Dick Cheney shooting his hunting buddy in the face. Of course it was fun. You only wish the guy died. But come on. Is it news? It was a fuckin' accident for G-d's sake. A mis-pulled trigger. Do you think Cheney *wanted* to shoot his pal in the face? Was it an international conspiracy of corporate face-shooters? Was it a plot hatched by the plastic surgery lobby? What's the problem? The guy didn't go on TV immediately and say, "Yo! I shot my best friend in the face." What the fuck? Cheney's a sinister asshole, but this has nothing to do with it. It was an accident.

The second "scandal" is even more disgusting. I've written about how nasty it gets when people "on my side," turn out to be as shitty, as people on the "other" side.

So when the Democrats (I'm a party member) and the liberals (I am one, but am usually embarrassed to say so) let the racist flag fly high, I'm not shocked. But I am nauseated.

Some foreign country operates every major harbor in America. The US hasn't been running it's own ports since Reagan was president. So when a port-running country changes hands, it's no big deal. Business as usual. Oh yeah? What if the new owners are *Arabs*? Oooo scary.

Is there any evidence that the United Arab Emirates has something to do with dangerous people? Other than George Bush, the answer is no. Have they been investigated more than other countries to make sure they're qualified? Yep.

One of my liberal friends says, "How could he do it? We're in Iraq fighting Arabs and he wants to give our ports to them?"

Huh? There are probably more Arabs in the US than in Iraq.

"Well, they're Muslims," she says.

"Mohammad Fuckin' Ali was a Muslim," I tell her. "The idea is not to get people hating us because they think we're *anti-Muslim*. Bush hasn't done anything right about that—until now."

"Well," she finally says, exasperated. "The only good Arab is a dead Arab."

Could you imagine a liberal saying that with any other group inserted in the *Arab* spot? But this racism is okay. It's like the *Yellow Peril* of WWII and "Red China."

Maybe, It'll elect Democrats. New York's two Senators, the amoral Hillary Clinton and the awful Chuck Schumer, held a rally in Newark.

"Keep US ports in US hands," they say. What ports are in US hands now?

Could you imagine this crew holding that rally if Israel wanted to take? Yeah, right.

OK, that's my political rant. Now let's get to Florida. I'm here to do a couple of book readings and go to the wedding of Ms. S, a hard-to-travel-with Goddess. You've read about her before.

I pull my rental Ford Taurus into the parking lot of an ugly condo, off an ugly street in Fort Lauderdale. I wonder if I'm in a tenant parking place. Am I gonna get towed?

Taking my father's DISABLED tag out of my travel bag, I hang it on the mirror. Who's gonna tow a cripple's car?

I open the trunk, pull out my suitcase full of books, and head for the elevator.

The graffiti-ed door opens slowly on a graffiti-ed interior. I roll in my suitcase and hit the "4" button. The elevator door creaks shut. With a jerk, it slowly carries me upward.

I've never met my host before. I got his name out of a traveler's directory. Any members can stay with any other member. We're both members.

When the elevator opens again, I wheel my bag out and around a corner to door 465. The inner door is open. Through the screen door I can see chaos. Desks filled with old newspapers. Books everywhere, on shelves, half opened, lying like dead birds on the table, couch, a rocking chair. An old antenna TV is in a corner. Two pieces of aluminum foil wrap around the antenna. There are large picture windows in back. Past them, a balcony.

I knock.

A man about 65 answers. I can see two hairless legs coming out of bright red shorts. He also wears a MIAMI adVICE T-shirt. His full head of gray hair, and a handsome, ironic face make me think of Leslie Nielson.

"You must be someone," he says in a deep, almost actorly voice. Opening the screen door, he motions for me to come in. He does not offer to take my bag.

Inside we shake hands. "I'm Tom Clearman," he says.

"Mykel Board," I answer.

"Have a seat," he tells me, motioning to the couch, then sitting himself in the rocker. "Everything is self-service around here. There's juice and water in the refrigerator. Take what you want."

I get up and pour myself a glass of Pineapple-Apricot Smash.

"The refrigerator," comes the voice from the other room, "you have to watch out for it. It doesn't always close. Sometimes you have to take a knife and poke it."

I hear the rocker creak as he stands up and flip-flops over to me. He takes a large knife out of a drawer, three-quarter closes the refrigerator door, inserts the knife pushing a little switch that controls the light. Then he shuts the door and withdraws the knife. "Like that," he says.

I reseat myself on the couch.

Tom talks. He's written a bunch. Comes from a Catholic background. I tell him I'm a Jew. He's an atheist.

"But being a Catholic is like being a Jew," he says. "You always are one. It's in the blood, the sub-conscious. You can disavow it, but it's still a part of you—like a club foot."

He doesn't 100% disavow it, though. It gave him an education—a good one. At that time, the church gave free schooling to any Catholic who wanted it. He believes the church helped a lot of people. He couldn't have gotten an education if it weren't for them. Throughout history, the church preserved learning when others wanted to destroy it.

Now, he writes for the Industrial Worker (IWW newspaper). Yep, the anarchist *Wobblies* of the 1920s. They're still going. Sort of.

He talks unions. Sell-outs. How the airline unions sold out the airline traffic controllers. How the trouble with unions today is that they don't support other unions. He's a non-stop talker. It's as if he so rarely gets a guest that he's got to tell me everything he's done and thought—ever. He's got a theory about World War II, Iraq, the price of milk.

The killer is, it's interesting. I like listening. He's had a fascinating history, filled with stories I'll use myself.

There's one about a famous atheist who stood in front of huge church groups calling on God to kill him *now* if he had any guts. Another story about a lone pro-Roman holdout in France ten years after the Roman Empire fell apart.

He tells me he was fired as a professor for trying to organize. He's now *a semi-retired full-time writer.* He's published an e-book about the pro-Roman hero and some other things. He has a motorcycle and belongs to Mensa. He invites me to a Mensa dinner.

"I think it'll be interesting for you," he says. "A lot of weird, smart people. We call it a *jaw wag.* That's mostly what people will be doing."

I thank him and tell him I don't want to intrude on his life.

"Oh no," he says. "You're welcome to come. And to stay here as long as you like. The only kink could be if Alberta, my lady friend from Boston, comes. Then I'd, well, you know...but you could stay here. She'd be in the back with me. She wouldn't take up the couch...you know."

By this time, I've graduated from juice to tea. I've just finished my second cup and am taking the teabag into the kitchen to throw it out. I look around for the garbage. Then I ask.

"Garbage?" says Tom. "No garbage. My mother taught me: never waste anything. Space. Especially space. People ask me, 'Where's the garbage?' Why, there is no garbage. See here? It's a cereal box. But look inside."

I look inside. There's a pop tart wrapper and a banana peel.

"See," he continues, "everything is it's own garbage bag. I never use plastic bags. I don't waste landfill."

"I use the plastic bags from the supermarket," I tell him. "I never buy garbage bags. It's stupid to buy something just to throw it out."

"You don't go far enough," he tells me. "I shop with a canvas bag. I just reuse it. Bring it everywhere. I never take a shopping bag in the first place."

It doesn't occur to me to ask him how he gets his cereal boxes filled with banana peels, and margarine tubs of cherry pits to the garbage cans. Maybe he carries them, one by one to the waiting bins.

I awaken the next day to the tap-tap-tap of a keyboard in the other room. Not loud, but enough. I got a good seven hours sleep, I think. Bad eight hours. The last hour taken by a dream about two girls—both wanting me—one with bright red hair. I agree to both but have to avoid one when I'm with the other. I don't remember much more. Also there's gas.

Most folks have morning gas. A horizontal buildup of methane, carbon dioxide, and hydrogen, trapped in the large intestine while you sleep.

Usually morning farts are huge noisy blasts. As if they started somewhere chest high and forced themselves through your body. BLLL-LAAAAAAAATTTTTT. But this morning, it's Pop. Pop. Pop. Almost dainty farts. Pfit. Pfit. Weird.

Weirder still, when I evacuate the farts, the related fecality is a giant brown spiral on the bottom of my host's toilet. A huge single curl, like skin peeled from an apple in one line.

When I flush the toilet, I hear Tom's voice from the other room. "I guess you're up," he says. "Like I said, everything is self-service here. Help yourself to coffee and some breakfast."

I go to the kitchen and pull the can of coffee from the cabinet shelf. I open it. Inside is a gum wrapper, an Almond Joy wrapper, and a very ripe apple core. The smell hits me before I can close the plastic lid. I check the other cabinets. A second can of coffee is even lighter than the first, and it feels warm. Mmmm compost! I think I'll do coffee at the 7-11.

Flash ahead to the MENSA JAW WAG. It's at a Chinese restaurant. I see a long table in the back with a few octogenarians, and a few slightly younger people.

"Is this Mensa?" I ask.

"Sure is," says a woman at the end, her walker parked behind her.

"I'm a friend of Tom's," I say. "He suggested I join you guys tonight."

"A friend of Tom's, huh?" says a hefty guy wearing a HARVARD T-shirt. "We won't hold it against you. He's not here yet, so have a seat."

I sit down and people say hello and then return to the conversation in progress before I arrived.

"You know, the biggest problem for intelligent people is snobbery. Too much, we look down on average people. We think we're better than they are."

The speaker is Mitch. Maybe my age with grayer hair, though more of it. He sits several inches away from the table, making room for his copious middle.

"I disagree," says a 30-something. He's the youngest person in the room, other than the busboys. Skinny, with light brown hair, his face is Mork-era Robin Williams. His accent is pure hillbilly. A dialect I cannot reproduce in print, so I won't.

"We really are better than those people," he says. "Our biggest problem is that the world is made for them. Not for us. I can't take classes anymore because things move so slow. For example, I'm in this computer networking class. The problems are binary, so there are only seven possibilities. By the time the professor finishes writing the problem on the board, I have the answer. It takes everyone else ages."

Next to me is an attractive Oriental woman with gray streaks through her jet-black hair. She has a perfect American accent. ABO, I guess. She asks Robin Williams, "Where are you from? Not from around here, I'd guess from the accent.."

"I'm originally from Arkansas," he says. "And where are you from?"

"I was shipped from Korea when I was very young," she answers. "A mail-order baby."

"Did you come in a box?" I ask and immediately remember the joke about what has to do with film and comes in a little yellow box: Woody Allen. I hope she hasn't heard it.

I fear she has. "No," she answers. "Did you?"

By this time Tom has come in and taken a seat next to me. The table is filling up fast. The waitress comes over to take our order.

"Hi, Tom," says the fat guy.

"Hi, Jim," says Tom. "Either of these two seats taken?"

"Two," says the Jim. "Don't get me started with two. You know there are really very few two-punchline jokes. Ya, know what I mean. You get a punchline, then BLAM! another one."

"A man has his last fight with his wife," he continues. "She's on her deathbed. It's the day before she dies, both of them know it. She says, 'Sammy, it's my last request. I want to you to promise me you'll let my mother ride in the same car with you during the funeral procession to the cemetery. Will you promise me that? My last request.'

"'Well,' says Sammy, 'I'd rather she was riding in the same car with *you*.'

"'Sammy, please!' says the wife.

"'Okay,' he says, 'but it'll spoil my day.'"

"Very funny," says the Korean mail-order woman sitting on my right. "But this is a restaurant, and we have to order. The waitress is standing right there."

"Waitress? Restaurant?" says Jim. "Don't get me started on restaurant jokes. A man at a restaurant sits down and orders soup. The waiter brings it, but the man raises his hand to stop him.

"'It's too cold,' he says, 'take it back.'

"The waiter is a little surprised, but returns with a fresh bowl of soup. Again the man complains, without tasting it. 'It's too cold. Take it back!'

"This time the waiter speaks up. 'But you haven't even tasted it.'

"'I know,' says the patron. 'Take it back.'

"After several times, the waiter is finally exasperated. 'Why are you complaining that the soup is too cold when you've never tasted one bowl?'

"The man answers, 'It won't be too cold when you need a tray to carry it instead of dipping your thumb in it.'"

"Jerry please," says the Oriental. "The waitress is here. You have a soup joke. You want soup?"

"Soup? Don't get me started on soup jokes. A man complains to the waiter about the soup.

"'Waiter,' he says, 'taste this soup.'

"The waiter walks over to him.

"'I'm sorry sir. Whatever the problem is we can fix it. If it's too bland we can spice it up. If it's too salty, we can…'

"The patron interrupts. 'Taste it!' he orders.

"'Sir, if you'd just explain the problem, I'd be happy to ask the chef.'

"'Taste it!' orders the customer. The waiter shrugs and decides that he'd better accommodate.

"'Ok,' he says. 'Where's the spoon?'

"'Aaahh,' says the customer, 'you got it. That's the problem. Now bring me a goddamn spoon!'"

I could go on about Tom and Mensa, but don't get me started.

Flash ahead: It's the wedding day and it's cold.

This is Florida, but it's cold. That's okay. I can keep my trench coat and hat on; I'll look cooler. Less like a bald old New York Jew.

So I arrive at the wedding wearing the first tie I've worn in a decade—a wide blue thing I found on the bottom of my closet. I'm looking cool. I got my trench coat, my Mafia hat, my army boots. Ho ho, I'll be the toughest looking guy there. They'll smell the importance of my presence.

I get out of the rented car, hand the keys to valet, and stride into the restaurant by the river.

As I enter, I spot an older man with gray hair, a thick red-veined nose, and large gravity-inflated ears. He spots me too.

"Are you the rabbi?" he asks.

"Huh? I'm a friend of the bride's." I answer, crestfallen.

"You look like a rabbi," he says. "Are you sure you're not a rabbi?"

"I'm sure," I tell him.

"Mykel," comes a familiar voice off to the side. It's Ms. S, in her white gown, with a veil. I'll tell ya, I don't know much about wedding gowns, but this one is a beaut. Not puffy. Not looking like the top of a cake, but more like a collection of carefully preserved doilies. Beautiful in a melancholic, 19th century way. And Ms. S herself is easy on the eyes. The two of them (Ms. S and her dress) carry me out of my *are-you-the-rabbi* depression.

We cheek peck.

"I'll get you away from Uncle Charlie," she whispers in my ear.

She brings me to a couple of guys named Fletch and Greasy. They are not wearing ties. They're wearing hooded sweatshirts.

They're talking as I come up to them. Fletch is saying, "Hey, remember that time we were on the halfpipe in back of PK's? You were killing it, doing gnarly handplants, landing all the way on the bottom of the tranny. So this guy wants to show he's a hotshot. He comes to the top of the pipe and wants to do an Ali-to-grind revert. He goes flying completely off the end. Just slams onto the flat-bottom. Pow! Right on his head. Coulda killed himself. We pissed ourselves laughing so hard. He didn't die though. Still, it was funny."

I don't get any of it. I'm not even sure they're talking English. What the hell is a halfpipe? What's a handplant? What's an Ali? Like Mohammad Ali? Is this Muslim talk?

I've come to the end of my allotted space. Looks like this is gonna have to finish in Part Two. More next month.

ENDNOTES: [*Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers (email to: god@mykelboard.com) will receive hot links to some of the topics here. Visitors to my blog (you can get it through the website) can comment on the column… or anything else.*]

Just in case you missed it department: I'm not going to have a sex change operation. That was

my yearly April Fool column.

The Wall Street Journal says that gynecologists who prescribe long-term birth control pills may be helping prevent more diseases than K-I-D-S infection. These pills suppress menstrual periods for months or years at a time.

The article quotes Patricia Sulak, a Texas obstetrician: "Having monthly periods are a modern phenomenon anyway," she says. I don't get that. Menses? Period? Those words mean MONTHLY. We didn't invent them in the 20th century.

According to Sulak, however, because of frequent childbirth and breast-feeding, the average aboriginal woman in Australia has 150 periods during her lifetime. The average North American woman has 400. Each of those extra ones could increase the risk of cancer, says the doctor. Unlike those birth control pills that really *prevent* cancer. Yeah, right.

No wonder those people who talk on cellphones in restaurants are so dumb dept: Scientists at the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority in Finland have found that cell phone radiation can damage the blood-brain barrier, a membrane that prevents harmful substances in the body from entering the brain. In their tests, as little as one hour of cell phone radiation caused blood-vessel cells to shrink.

Do deer use cellphones? dept. Mad deer disease has been reported in eight US states and Canada. The rate of infection may be as high as 3%. It looks like the disease can jump species too. Five young people in the infected areas died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease—the human equivalent of Mad Cow/Deer. Three of the five were regular venison eaters.

What's in a Word? dept: *Utne Reader* reports that *"cougar"* is Canadian slang for an older woman who seduces younger male "prey." It used to be a put-down, but, like "queer," it's now worn proudly. There are cougar dating services, cougar cruises and www.urbancougars.com that promote the idea. Could you imagine a similar thing for guys who like younger women? NOW and The Christians would be up in arms!

I'll Write One dept: AdAge.com reports that McDonald's is looking for hip-hop artists to mention it in rap songs. Of course, the artists would be compensated for the product placement. As of January, McDonald's says they have not yet found a hip-hop song they can use "to positively reflect our brand."

The Truth So Nobody Believes It dept: I told you there'd be a scandal a minute. Here in New York, a female daycare worker is arrested for having sex with a four-year-old boy. The city is shocked. The woman talks to the press.

"The boy enjoyed it," she says. "He was enthusiastic."

People are even more outraged. *How could a four-year-old enjoy sex?* (I guess they've never seen kids play doctor.) And what's more? *Even if the kid did enjoy himself, he's too young!*

Of course, at four years old, you're too young for pleasure. You should be miserable. You'll need the practice for later in life.

So what's the problem? dept: BNI (great no-pix sex review newsletter! Info from BNI@aol.com) reports that a Sacramento court arraigned a California high school teacher for having sex with a student in a car. Her two-year-old was strapped into the back seat. The boy was 16. So what? The baby was strapped in, safe. What more do they want?

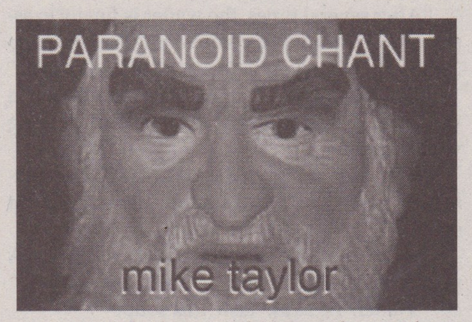
This is the problem! dept: The same issue of BNI reports that in South Africa Ann-Marie Engelbrecht was convicted of killing her husband. Her sentence was five minutes of detention. Supposedly, the husband was unkind to her. The judge, a woman (surprise!), said that Engelbrecht already served her sentence by being married to the guy.

Diet? What Color? Dept: AARP Magazine reports that an eight-year study by the University of Texas in San Antonio found that 54.5 percent of adults who drank diet soda became overweight. This compares with 32.8 percent of those who drank sugared soda.

Smell This Baby dept: You know that "new car smell" that everybody likes? It reminds me of sniffing a packet of Lipton's soup. Well, that lovely smell comes from *volatile organic compounds*. The fumes from these compounds can cause nausea, headaches, throat irritation and more. Japanese car makers have already begun to cut back. They say by 2007, their vehicle interiors will meet air quality guidelines set for residential buildings.

In the US, I expect laws to require a similar parity. But rather than decrease the chemicals in cars, the US will take the more business-like approach and *increase* the pollutants in buildings.

Inadequate Thanks dept: I wanted to list names and addresses, but I don't have time or space. But MUCHO THANKS to the folks who helped me out with readings in Ft. Lauderdale, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, the Bowery, and especially Providence, Rhode Island. You guys ROCK…or at least walk unsteadily. Thanks for everything.



I approach this month's topic hesitantly, as with few exceptions, I feel like punks discussing major labels is like men discussing pregnancy. Punk, as suburban folk music, eschews overt erudition and experimentation in favor of common musical and lyrical themes, 4/4 time signatures, and a narrow threshold of acceptable song lengths. When bands venture outside of these strictures, they either become really special punk bands (Beat Happening, Fugazi, Meat Puppets, Slits), "sellouts," or simply no longer punk bands (JonesVery, Rain Like the Sound of Trains, Le Tigre, Lightning Bolt)[1]. It's easy to write off choices you'll never have to make. It's much harder to delve more deeply into how your choices frame your relationship to capitalism and what that has to do with assuming an identity.

The error in constructing a group identity from a series of fixed signs is that society's context is in constant flux, much of which is guided by capitalist adaptations (i.e. dressing in all black, dying your hair, etc. isn't a threat to anything—however, if it's fun for you, you should do it!). As it has been oft said, the business of America is business, and if that means that the new office place is peopled by young executives who wear their Jawbreaker shirts to work, then so be it. Even better, one's otherness can be marketed as cultural cachet, so fuck it: get tattooed, wear a His Hero is Gone patch. No one cares. The interesting question to me is how those whom consider themselves The Punxes can continue to separate themselves from the mainstream they disdain as it morphs around rebel subcultures, absorbing their accoutrements and effectively reprogramming itself to sell kids to other kids.

Do you want to be beholden to your seventeen-year old self? Because though I believe young people have every right to self-determination and should be encouraged to make their own mistakes and win their own fights, I also hope to learn more all the time.

How far out of society are you willing to operate? Do you know how to grow food or start a fire?

Is operating outside of society even an honorable pursuit? We, for the most part, live in cities. Punk is historically on the side of the working class. So is removing yourself the way to work for the rights of poor people, immigrants, and minorities? Punk *is* a symbolic removal of oneself from dominant structures…so maybe it's not inherently political at all and I'm flailing at the wrong points. If you agree with that, this column is done.

Are you guided by principle or fear of failure?

This is about corporate interlocution in our lives as punks, but also as *people*. Obsessing over means of distribution of goods can be likened to an eating disorder—we create an illusion of control over our lives by controlling particular illusions. Record pressing plants are sweatshops. Record labels are businesses. No one has changed that.

These are all subordinate points, questions for discussion whose answers have no fixed address. Make no mistake though, that important things are happening without our input right now. Now. If you wan to obsess about intellectual property rights and the ramification of downloading music, maybe a better illustration of the dangers of corporate control of ideas is the fight to allow manufacture generic AIDS medications in Africa while the infection rate skyrockets. If you want to talk about self-determination, talk about South Dakota's ban on abortion and Mississippi's subsequent campaign to do the same. As much as punks have honed to a point their specific rhetoric of sixties-lefty-Marxist idealism, we're still not talking about the human damage wrought by the governments we claim to be fighting with fashions and songs. And if you're not talking about it, *you're not talking about*

it. I know the seductive thing about the major label discussion is that it pretends to allude to larger political issues, and it sometimes does, but for the most part, it's a wet sandwich.

In summary:

I don't care if your band signs to a major label. Your shows won't be as fun and it'll begin to feel like you're just going to work drunk, but you'll be able to afford cocaine. And hopefully, a good lawyer.

[1] I want to make sure you know I'm adopting an editorial voice here, duh. I like bands that push the margins, and think very punkly of that…

CrimethInc. Workers' Collective Bullet-in

We were poised and ready to send in another typical column this month, about how to set up a pirate radio station or why to smear excrement on the doors of pay toilets or whatever, when an injunction came in from MRR headquarters to focus on punk rock economics. Fine, then—as CrimethInc. writer-on-duty tonight, I'll hold forth on that.

To state the obvious and get that out of the way, everybody associated with this column (and, I dare say, with CrimethInc. generally) is a revolutionary anarchist of some kind, so we're not big on business. Not just big business, either—any kind of business. If you're answering to the demands of the economy, you're not acting freely, whether you're serving under a boss, you're your own boss, or you're bossing others around. The demands of moving units and paying for raw materials (let alone rent, pay toilets, etc.) influence little record labels within the capitalist economy just as much as they do big corporate ones.

Bearing that in mind, it should be no surprise to everybody that the DIY scene we were all so excited to be building fifteen years ago now has its own hierarchies of power and wealth. At every level, capitalism rewards those who are most ruthlessly focused on out-competing everyone else—in the punk milieu, that means those who buy the most advertising, those who compromise with corporate distribution monopolies, those who release the most vapid products that can then be marketed to just about anybody regardless of individual needs.

The counterforce to this is the desire many of us still have to live differently, and some records do sell as a consequence of that, too. Artwork made by those who are deeply invested in something besides success on the terms of each-against-all competition tends to be better, despite the challenge of having fewer resources to work with. (This should be obvious to anyone reading this magazine.) If it doesn't sell as widely as trendy garbage, that may be because it is less suited for mass-production: it comes out of a more individualized milieu, and proves really inspiring for others immediately connected with it while not pretending to be meaningful outside that context. And small is beautiful, right? The smaller the shows, the more obvious the essential DIY punk truth is to everyone there: *you too can do this.*

In this regard, we can look at the proliferation of small-run record production as a triumph, not as a sign that radical bands or DIY ethics are not "popular enough." One thousand DIY bands playing unique music in basements and spreading exciting ideas to a thousand kids each is infinitely better than one radical band (even if they're putting out their own records) becoming known by one hundred thousand kids—do the math.

So yeah, here's to small-scale music scenes. But let's get back to the reason these must struggle so much—capitalism, which centers all resources in the hands of the most ruthless, stupid, and boring. As long as we're trying to be creative and free—however nobly, with however much self-sacrifice and willingness to eat out of the trash—in a world in which resources are distributed this way, it's gonna be a struggle, and most of us (those not from privileged backgrounds) are never going to get to experience or contribute to others most of the wonderful things we should be able to.

Hence, we're revolutionaries. By any means necessary, we strive to get our hands on resources held hostage by those who believe in private property, and share those resources in such a way that everyone has the chance to make use of them. That's the ethic we see in good punkhouses where the door price for shows is negotiable but there's always enough to pay the bands—that's the ethic we live out when we steal guitar strings rather than demanding an inflated guarantee to play shows—that's the whole idea behind working to overthrow the government and the corporations behind it.

In this light, you can imagine what my answer will be to the questions the MRR coordinator sent us about whether it's OK for punk bands to sign to major labels, or for any of us to buy records on those labels. Those fucking labels exist to exploit us, to do everything they can to take our lives out of our hands—why would we give them our resources (whether our music, or our money) with which to do this? Even the independent labels that aren't committed to working towards non-capitalist economics are doing the same thing, just by competing to sell without regard for the consequences.

Sure, I understand that we've all got to eat, but capitalism isn't feeding a lot of us, and it's not in anyone's best interest to eat at other's expense until said others start flying airplanes into buildings in revenge. (This may sound like a facile summary, but fundamentalist Islam has been able to proliferate primarily because of the obvious injustices of Western imperialism.) The world has to change, and it won't change if we keep making the same compromises over and over. Capitalism prospers and continues because we keep it running—signing their contracts, buying their products, paying their bills. If we find beauty in the little sparks of life that the DIY network has made possible, we should be pulling all the resources we can out of corporate control so we can use those to light fires.

To make this more personal—myself, I grew up in a middle-income household, and have been in punk bands for almost two decades. Those bands have been of mixed class—at its best, the punk scene brings together people from various social classes and backgrounds—and I've gotten to learn a lot about how to make DIY projects sustainable across those years. The bands have always been non-profit, which is easier for some members than others when people have different means and different incomes. (That's why many end up compromising, of course—they have mouths to feed, and not just their own.) For dealing with this challenge, I'll propose a few basic theses.

The first principle is from each according to her means—whatever you've got, put it into the band, and if someone else lacks material resources, cover for them. The second is that the band should seek to provide for the needs of those participating in it—not in the currency of capitalism (fuck asking for enough money from promoters to pay rent for everyone's apartments!), but rather in the social currency the DIY community can provide. Over time a band can be a way for its members to build up an infrastructure that makes life possible even without much money. Collective housing, shared resources such as vehicles, group acquisition of food (you know, shoplifting, dumpstering, and so on), and building up relationships while on tour with people who do alternative health care are all examples of this, though not the only ones. Bands should put out their own records and do their own distribution and book their own tours, assisted by other DIY bands, so all the money and contacts and other forms of power that come from these will be under collective control (and not just the control of one band member, either!). A third principle is that the band should give back to the community, too—play benefits for a space for a child care collective, so when your drummer has children she won't have to quit to take care of them alone.

All this stuff shouldn't be new to anybody. This is an old, old topic in punk circles, but it deserves to be brought up again from time to time. I remember hanging out some years ago with people from the Subhumans (the British band, not the Canadian one), and at a certain point in the night they got into the argument about the Clash selling out that they must have had every drinking session since two decades earlier. It can be a bore, but until we actually overthrow capitalism once and for all we'll be doomed to keep discussing this stuff and honing our strategies for dealing with it.

Let's conclude with the conditions on which it might after all be worthwhile and effective to sign to a major or otherwise participate in The System. Granted, everything is a compromise—keeping things small-scale and DIY can mean not building a widespread enough resistance to chal-

lenge the powers that be, for example, as sure as signing to a major label can mean gaining listeners while losing the ability to move them into action. Rage Against the Machine did send a million dollars to the Zapatistas—doesn't that count as fighting capitalism?

I'd argue that the greater sums of money they made for their employers, who are hell-bent on stopping revolutionaries like the Zapatistas, still outweighs the effectiveness of the money they donated (not to mention the way that their mere participation in the system reinforces the assumption that there are no other options). But what if they'd gone on some live MTV program hosted by a popular VJ and taken him hostage live on the air? If RATM, armed with machine guns, had barricaded themselves in the studio with the blubbering video jockey tied to a chair and begging for mercy, and demanded before all armchair America that their record label give the *rest* of the profits from their records to the Zapatistas—now *that* would have been something!

So there you have it—perhaps there are ways to work within the system after all. The problem, of course, is that in the process of making their way to the top, potential troublemakers get used to compromising, get used to all the little rewards for it, and lose their initial fire and idealism. If you're in a band considering signing to a bigger label, and you really think you can go all the way to the top without forgetting that the only reason to perform on Saturday Night Live is to make sure you'll be the last punk band ever on corporate TV, then go for it. Otherwise, stick around here with us, building up an infrastructure for another way of life.

For free resources discussing some of the ways to go about this, check out www.crimethinc.com, or write us at CrimethInc. Strike Force, PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402.

I didn't even like babies until I had one. I didn't hate them or anything; I was just indifferent. I'm an only child who never babysat and my younger cousin wasn't born until I was 18. Whenever a boyfriend would romanticize out loud about us having a kid together someday, I'd silently cringe as the mere thought sounded a loud, red-light-flashing alarm in my brain, signaling for me to run fast away from him.

But that all changed one day, very unexpectedly. Out of the blue, just like that, any intellectual reasoning against having a child was silenced and my biological clock hormones took over. It was weird to become the one who would romanticize out loud to new boyfriends about wanting to have a kid someday. I ran away from those who said they never wanted kids.

I was 27 and it took about a year and a half to fall in love for real and with someone who also saw having a baby in their future. The rest is history. Our first baby was born just two weeks before my 30th birthday and our second is ten days old today. She's sleeping on my lap on a pillow as I type this one-handed, and her big sister, two weeks shy of her sixth birthday, is off at kindergarten.

Of course I realize that childbirth itself and being ga-ga over a newborn isn't inherently punk and just may be the pink elephant in the room of a punk publication, but the birth story is pretty DIY, so here goes.

Just like with my first baby, I got my prenatal care done with midwives. Though I had planned an out-of-hospital birth for my first baby, I went more than two weeks past my due date and wound up having a rather traumatic hospital birth. When I went past my due date with this second baby, I remained calm and confident that she would come in her own time, regardless of what the calendar was ticking away.

I had learned a lot about birth since my first baby was born, mostly from running the office of a birth center with three midwives the last two years, and knew that due dates are no exact science. As long as things remain to be checking out normal, there's no need for intervention.

I will admit, though, when it was 13 days past my due date and I was still not in labor, I started getting a bit tweaky. Memories from being induced at the hospital the first time around were creeping into my mind, even though I had done tons of mental preparation throughout this pregnancy to get rid of that baggage and its associated fears.

After walking a few miles on the beach, I called my midwife to come check me. She determined that I was still 2-3 cm dilated, the same that I'd been for over a week. Soft cervix already a tad dilated = good. No contractions = bad.

I conveyed my anxieties to her and asked what her recommendation would be if I went one more day with no labor. She stopped me and told me to listen to myself. She said that just by looking to the next day and seeing myself still pregnant, I was setting myself up for that. She said to just concentrate on the now and gave me some very specific enema and castor oil instructions to follow, something about an attack from the top as well as the bottom. She also dropped her four-year-old daughter off for me to babysit, as that would keep my mind off things.

Waiting for her to return with the castor oil, I remembered a story she had told me about a mama who jumped rope like a championship boxer as a way to try to get her labor on. So that's just what I did too. Her daughter and mine just sat there looking at me like I was crazy, not even begging for a turn with the jump rope like they usually do.

When her assistant delivered the castor oil, I got busy. First the castor oil, two ounces mixed with orange juice. I had to wait an hour before I did the enema, so I read a book while the girls played dress up. After the enema, I had to take a nap. I'm not talking about some wimpy 4.5 oz Fleet Enema. The one she had me doing was an IV looking bag that hung by a coat hangar from a towel rack in the bathroom and held a water, castile soap, black and blue cohosh mixture. To say it took a lot out of me is neither an intended pun nor an understatement.

Daddy 'Nesto hung out with the girls while I slept an hour. My midwife had come to pick up her girl in that time and now it was time to get my girl fed, bathed, and to bed. I relaxed some more while Daddy 'Nesto did all that. Just as she got to sleep at 8 p.m., I started getting some irritating cramps. They felt intestinal, not cervical or uterine and I just thought it was the castor oil trying to work but not being able to since the enema had already expelled everything out of me.

With every cramp, I got up from what I was doing and did a doorknob squat. My midwife suggested I do that as a way to help the baby's head put pressure on the cervix. She also suggested doing nipple stimulation, so I employed Daddy 'Nesto to that task. The cramps kept coming and I kept squatting. We started to watch a movie we checked out from the library, *Being John Malkovich*. When the movie started to annoy me, I took to the kitchen to make cookies.

For weeks, I had all the right ingredients stashed so I would have a project to do while in early labor. (They say once you start to burn the cookies, it's time to call the midwife.) While mixing the batter, I needed to take breaks to walk in circles around the living room to get through the cramps. I was in total denial that I was actually in early labor. In hindsight, I think this was for two reasons. First, I never experienced early labor with my first baby due to having been induced, so I didn't know what it felt like. Second, I didn't want to be disappointed if it was actually false labor.

I didn't even make it to the "when the cookies start to burn" part though. When I went to add the last ingredient to the batter, the chocolate chips, and the bag just exploded out of my hands, spilling chips all over the kitchen counters and floor, I told Daddy 'Nesto it was time to call the midwife. It was 11 p.m.

I could still talk through what by now I was sure were contractions, so she told me to time them for 30 or 45 minutes and call her back with a pattern. They were coming two to four minutes apart. I called my friend who lives just a couple blocks away and who is also a midwife to come be with me. I was lucky that her plans to go to Key West had fallen through and that she was in town and on her way over.

For living so close, it felt like I was waiting forever for her. I had been getting more uncomfortable real fast and not finding anything in the house just the right height to hang onto, I got in the bathtub and started filling it with warm water. I turned all the lights off and lit some candles. I did these things not with deliberate consciousness, but by some subconscious automation.

When my friend got to my house at about 12:30 a.m., she found me soaking in the tub on my left side, holding onto a drawer handle across from me for support and trying to sink my wide open moaning mouth's teeth into the tub's metal

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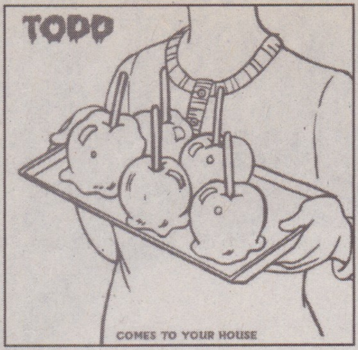

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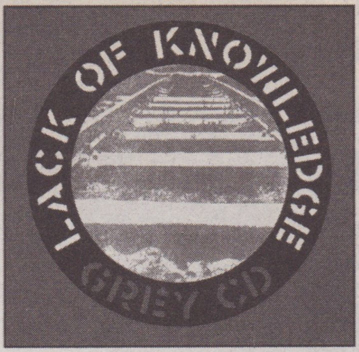

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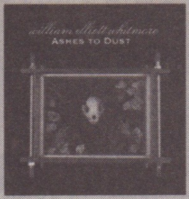

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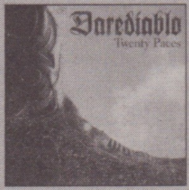

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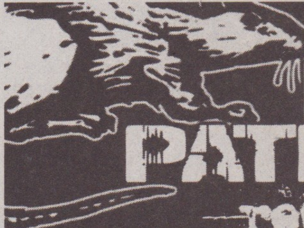

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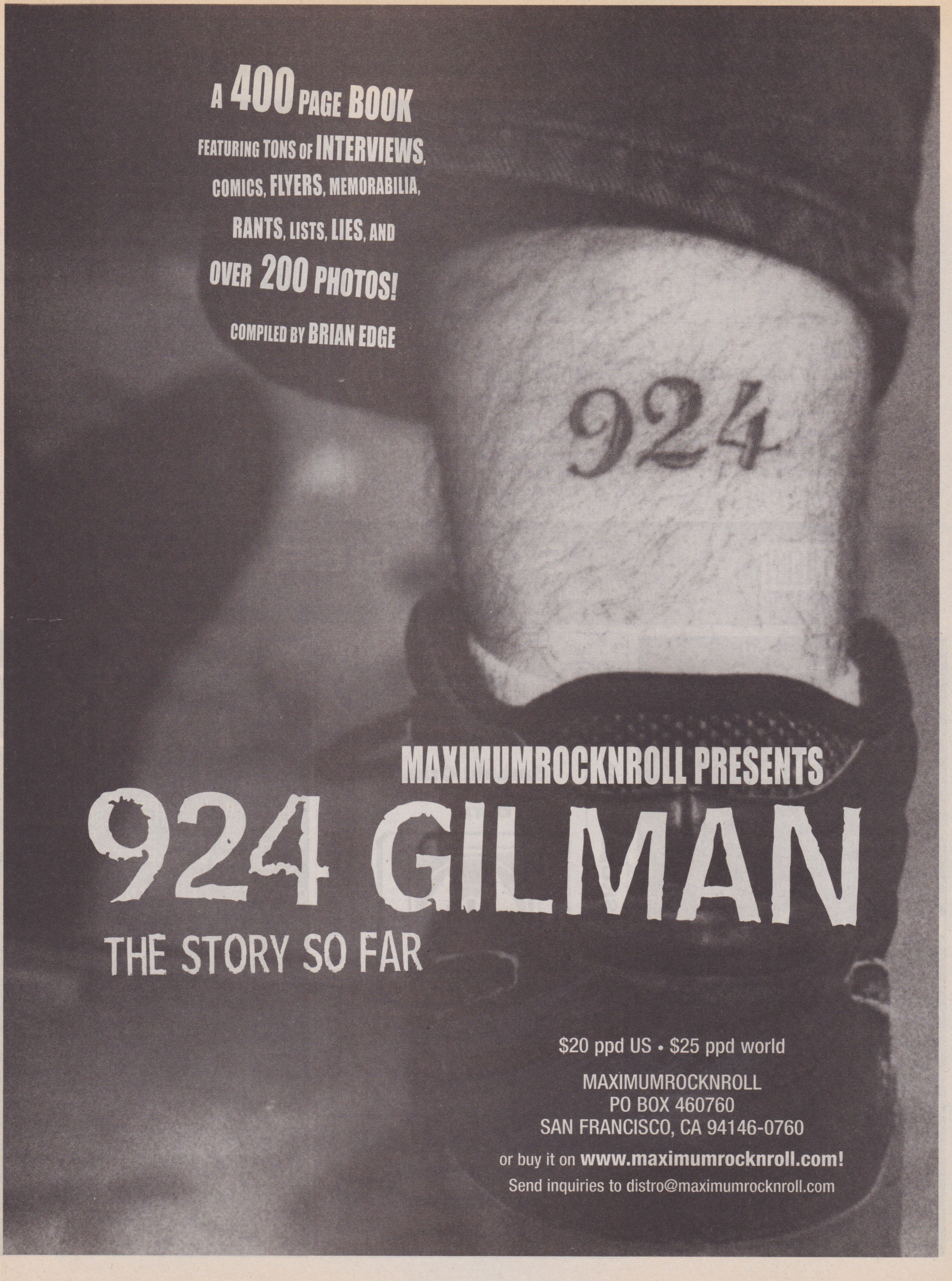
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side. She checked in with me for a little while, found I was 6 cm dilated and promptly called my midwife who then showed up by 1 a.m. with her daughter in tow, as I had requested. My girl woke up shortly after that and it felt nice to be surrounded by the two girls who we all jokingly refer to as the kid-wife and the mid-kid, two midwives and 'Nesto.

From there, things really picked up and I was 8 and half cm dilated before I knew it. I knew I'd be having the baby soon but I started to worry because I was having a premature urge to push. I was not having a hard time staying on top of the contractions in terms of coping with the pain. I was able to ride through them like a surfer on top of a wave. But at the peak of what seemed like every other contraction, I'd feel my body pushing and I couldn't control it.

I knew I was supposed to listen to my body and follow its lead but I couldn't shake the memory of my first birth's premature urge to push and being told then that I had to control it or else I might swell my cervix and need a c-section. Luckily, I did not have fear-filling nurses with me this time. Instead, I had the most calm, reassuring midwives who told me to just go with what I felt.

I got out of the tub and made it to the bed in my room to get on my elbows and knees. That's supposed to counter a premature urge to push. I was only there for one contraction when my midwife checked me and told me there was no cervix left. I thought it too good to be true and questioned her, "What does that mean?" She told me that I was completely dilated at 10cm and that I could push. Still thinking it too good to be true, I asked her if she was sure. She promised that she was sure.

I asked someone to call my friend to come take pictures. Then I asked 'Nesto to put on some music. He asked what I wanted to hear but I couldn't decide and there was no taking time for me to figure it out for myself. He asked, "Hard or soft?" I didn't know so I said, "Medium." Poor guy. He didn't choose too poorly though. First there was the new 50 Million CD followed by some Kung Fu USA, which would have been OK had it not been the "Lucifer" song. Nothing like listening to a little ditty about Satan while you're birthing a baby…

I made it back to the bathtub where I felt more comfortable because of how water relieves gravity's pressure, although it was rather cramped quarters. To say it was intense to feel the baby's every little centimeter of progression down the birth canal is quite an understatement. It was a downright wild ride that I knew wasn't going to stop until it was over. 25 minutes later, I pushed my baby right out into the water. It was 2:44 a.m. and my photographer friend hadn't made it in time.

Other than the memories of thinking my ass was going to explode out of me in a million pieces, followed by my hip bones and the final "ring of fire" sensation I didn't feel with my first birth because the OB automatically gave me an episiotomy, I have one distinct memory of looking up to see my midwife's daughter holding the flashlight for her mama and my girl standing next to her with her fingers in her ears. Later, she would say, "Mom, that's the loudest you've ever yelled!"

I sat back holding my newborn on my chest in awe of the entire experience. I don't think I'd ever felt luckier or more thankful. The midwives stuck around for a few hours to take care of us and check us out. I didn't need even one stitch and my new baby girl weighed in at 7 pounds, 4 ounces and measured 21". Blood pressures, pulses, temperatures and respirations were all OK for both of us but when I got up to pee, I passed out and had to be brought back around with some ammonia-smelling thing.

When I felt good enough again, I got showered off and got into bed with my new baby, 'Nesto and our big girl. We admired the baby's elfin-like looks and noticed that her overgrown fingernails and peeling skin on her hands and feet suggested she was well done and that she had come right when she needed to. Looking closely at my placenta, my midwife confirmed that it was starting to show signs of getting old with calcifications and that sure enough; the baby had come right when she needed to.

'Nesto left me with my girls in the bed for a bit while he went to the kitchen to finish baking the cookies that never got a chance to burn. Instead, we enjoyed them still hot from the oven, cooked just to brown and perfect, and fell fast asleep just after the sun came up.

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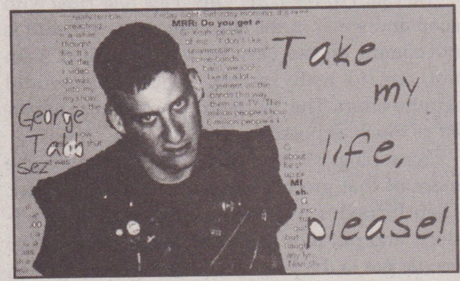


So, there I was, in the hospital, with my third surgery this year and one of the young interns poking around my exposed guts with a purple-gloved finger asks me if I'm the same George Tabb that used to write for *Maximumrocknroll*.

"Used to?" I ask, thinking this is a very bad sign, I'm gonna die, and therefore he's already put me in the past tense.

"I still write for 'em," I tell the young kid, who's busy examining my wound, which looks like a vagina made of filet minion.

"They're still around?" he asks.

I tell them they are.

"Ya know, I used to read that in high school," he replies.

I look at him and figure that was probably three years ago, tops.

"I heard you wrote a story about Minor Threat," he says, adding, "I've been straight edge for many years now."

"I should hope so," I tell the kid as he has me turn on my left side, and then, with his other purpled-gloved hand, inserts his pointer finger up my rectum.

"That fuckin' hurts," I yell as he pokes my enlarged prostate.

"So tell me about when you first met them," he says as he slowly slides his finger out of my body, which feels like I just had an accident on the polyester hospital sheets that made my skin get hives.

"Well," I say to the kid, "how much time to you have?"

He looks at his fancy watch, which I'm sure is covered with germs, and then replies, "Enough. Nobody here seems to be going anywhere except the morgue downstairs."

I look at him, horrified.

"Just kidding," he says, but somewhere, deep down, I know he isn't.

"Well," I begin, it was a hot day south of hell and…"

*

So the van pulls up outside the American Legion hall in Gainesville, Florida, and it has Washington, DC, plates as expected. I yell to my pal, John McQuiggan, that they are here.

He gets all excited and tells me that they are his favorite band, and they fucking rule. Actually, he has told me that for like the last week. Continuously. Even that morning, while we were shaving our heads with his parents' horse clippers, he kept saying they were his favorite band of all time. I kept asking him why they were so great, and he just kept telling me that they were awesome.

So I would ask him: was it the music, the image, or what? He would just say, "You'll see."

So I guess I had to wait.

And now we were skateboarding around the front of the American Legion hall, waiting for them to arrive, and eventually, they did. The van pulled up to the side door where the bands were loading in, and came to a stop. John got all excited and skated quickly toward the van. I followed him. I had to see what the big deal was. I mean, here was this band that he really, really loved.

Bob, the lead singer from my band, Roach Motel, loved them as well. We were playing with them that night, as was John's band, Liquid Plumber.

Actually, Liquid Plumber was on first, they were on second, and we, Roach Motel, were headlining.

Third base.

So I really had to see what the big deal about an opening band was. John and I skated really close to the van, then hopped off our boards. He was so excited that I could see him trembling. I figured that this band must be fucking great. I mean, everyone who was setting up the show walked out of the hall and was approaching the van.

Bob was with his girlfriend, Cindy, and both were talking excitedly about the band. Our drummer, Frank, actually stopped setting up the PA, and wanted to meet them. Our bass player, Paul, stopped reading *Mein Kampf* long enough to look up at the van, and our other guitarist, Jeff, actually put down a beer long enough for it to get warm in the putrid Florida weather.

This band must be something, I thought as I looked at the van.

I imagined them getting out of it. I figured

them as big guys like the Misfits or something. Maybe they had big bones on their jackets, big shoulders, and devil-locks. That'd be cool. Then I thought of them looking like the Ramones. Maybe they all wore leather jackets with chains on them, and had long hair and sniffed glue or something. Then I thought maybe they looked like those "hippies" (as my apartment manager had called them), Black Flag, with long hair and facial scruff and stuff. Or maybe even they looked like the Romantics, with matching red leather outfits, and slicked back or blown-dry hair.

But nothing, I mean nothing, could prepare me for what they was to come.

Nada.

For when those doors opened in the van and out came the band, my jaw sank to my knees. They weren't wearing devil-locks, and didn't have big shoulders, and weren't wearing leather jackets with chains on them, nor did they have long hair, or look like a bunch of hippies with beards, and they weren't even wearing matching red leather outfits with slick hairstyles.

No.

They came out of their van wearing nice clean and pressed blue jeans, alligator shirts, nice clean sneakers, and fucking normal haircuts.

I looked at John and Bob. They looked at me. I said, "This is Minor Threat? They're wimps in Izods."

*

To tell you the truth, I had never heard a Minor Threat record. Actually, at that time, they only had one single out, and they were on some DC compilation called *Flex Your Head*. I had the compilation, but never really listened to it.

Well, actually, I tried to listen to it once. I put it on my Sears Turntable With The Automatic Record Changer, and clicked back the start button. The record fell on to the turntable, then my bird, Wally, named after Watty from the Exploited, flew onto it.

Wally was a cockatiel that I named after Watty because it had this boss mohawk. It also knew how to bite real good. Real hard for a little bird. Only, it'd only bite my girlfriend, and her friends. It never bit me, my friennds, or band. Okay, maybe it bit Paul, but that was only because he was a nazi. But it never bit me. Then one day Wally laid an egg.

D'oh.

Turns out he was a she.

I had given her a male name, and she laid eggs. Actually, at first, I thought it was odd that a male bird could lay an egg, so I took her to the vet. It was there I learned that she wasn't of the male gender. But not before verbally assaulting the vet for my own stupidity. Then I briefly thought about changing her name, but figured, why bother? I mean, she was a bird, after all.

A Freebird.

And I wasn't gonna date her or anything. I mean, I wouldn't, like, have to go to a club with her or take her out to dinner and introduce her to people. It wasn't like I had to take her home to meet the folks, and they'd say, "George, why does your girlfriend have a boy's name?"

Actually, thinking about it, my dad would have probably made moves on her if he thought she was my girlfriend. Beak or not.

Anyway, Wally walks all over the record, and then poops on it. Those greenish, fluidly bird squirts. I get all upset and tell her she just shit on my new hardcore record from DC, and now I'll never hear Iron Cross, Teen Idols, or Minor Threat.

Wally just looks at me and turns her head sideways. So I repeat what I just told her and she makes that bird chirping noise. I figure she understands.

She does. She flies off the turntable and lands on the couch where I was reading the latest issue of *Ripper*, some old California zine that had pictures of Roach Motel in it, then she shits on that too.

Punk Rock.

So I call my pal, Bill The Hippie, who works at a local record store called Chapter Three, and ask him how to get bird shit off the record. I ask if I should use that fluid stuff that cleans off records to get it off, or what. He says soap and water is fine. I say, "Soap and water? As in what I sometimes use with dirty dishes?"

He tells me that that would be fine. That I should treat a record just like dirty dishes and wash them. I thank him for his advice and hang up the phone. I look over to Wally, who is busy pecking out the eyes of Henry Rollins on the cover of *Ripper*, and tell her that everything will be okay. She acknowledges me by pooping on the couch.

So I start to wash my vinyl *Flex Your Head* with soap and water in the sink, but the green stuff is not coming off that easy. Now I gotta tell ya, I am not one to really scrub dishes. That would require effort. The "E" word. Something I avoided as much as possible.

Scrubbing a little harder, and getting some more of that green gook out, I feel a bit better. Then I dried it with one of my Uncle Floyd T-shirts and put it on the turntable. As soon as the needle got to the part where the bird had shit on it, the record began to skip. Fuck. So I called back Chapter Three and asked to speak to Bill The Hippie. I got Bill on the phone, and told him my problem. He told me just to wash it harder, and not to worry about it. I thanked him again, and got off the phone.

"Fuck this," I thought to myself as I started to wash off *Flex Your Head* again. I can't really wash this. That would like be doing work or something. And using the "E" word. No, I had to get this clean without that. That's Punk Rock.

So I took it next door to my neighbor Jim's apartment. He had just purchased a new dishwasher, and he said I could wash my record with it.

I put it in there, and saw that it was the only thing in there, besides a few assorted forks and spoons. I told him I had more dishes in my apartment, and asked if I could wash those as well. I figured, why waste the energy and water?

He said, "Sure."

So I got lots of plates and bowls and pots and pans that had been sitting in my kitchen sink for the last eight months collecting cockroaches. By the time I got back to Jim's, he had gone out to the pool to "scope on the babes" as he called it. Right.

Anyway, I look at the settings on the dishwasher and decide on hot water with the optional heated dry feature. I figured, what the hell, I'll go first class. It was his electric bill. So I turn it on, then go back to my apartment for a while to finish reading *Ripper*, which, by this point, featured Henry Rollins on the cover with no eyes, and bird shit tattoos all over his chest. It made him look better.

I went back to Jim's apartment about forty-five minutes later. The machine was off, and cool. I opened the thing and got a rush of heat to my face. Neato, I thought, that should raise the temperature in here from One Sixty to One Eighty. Florida.

Anyway, I look at all the pots and pans and dishes I had put in there, and they were still all dirty. Well, maybe not that dirty. It was just the roaches I guess. They had dried to the dishes and were all hard, like microwaved raisins. But for the most part they were clean. I mean, hell, I could put food on the plates around the roaches.

Then I looked at *Flex Your Head*. It certainly lived up to its title.

Shit.

It was all twisted and stuff, and looked more like a bowl than a record. I cursed myself out for ruining *Flex Your Head* instead of *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*, that MRR compilation.

*

As Minor Threat exits their van I really didn't know what to make of it. I hadn't heard their music yet, and now I wasn't so sure I wanted to. I mean, what kinda fucking punk rocker wears alligator shirts?

And their jeans.

As they loaded out their new Marshall Stacks, I could see that their pants were totally new and clean. As well as their sneakers.

I lean over and whisper in John's ear, "Are you sure this is Minor Threat?"

He looks at me and shrugs his shoulders.

Then this bald guy with a knit cap gets out of the van with a Stephen King book in his hand. He is wearing a faded gray T-shirt, baggy pants, and dirty old sneakers. He walks up to me and John.

"Hi, my name is Ian," he politely says.

Johns whispers in my ear that they must be Minor Threat. I extend my hand, and shake hands with the Sluggo look-alike. He is very nice and asks me if I know where the bathroom is, and where he can get some nachos with cheese. I tell him there is a bathroom in the front of the American Legion hall, and there is a Magic Market up the street, that has nachos with cheese. He thanks me and walks away.

I look at John, and his jaw is around his ankles. I ask him if he is okay. John tells me that he can't believe I just shook hands with Ian MacKaye.

I said, "What, that guy who had to take a leak and eat crappy Magic Market food?"

John nods his head. He explains to me that Ian MacKaye is god. I tell him, if he is god, maybe he'll buy me a beer. I yell to Ian after he takes a leak and is on his way to the Magic Market to get me a beer. I don't think he hears me.

I go back inside the American Legion hall, and continue preparations for that night. Roach Motel is on stage, tuning their guitars and stuff, and Frank keeps beating the bass drum over and over while the PA guy keeps telling him there is some "ring" or something in the drums, and he wants to get it out. So the P.A. guy keeps fiddling with the knobs. I wonder how that is going to get the ring out, and wouldn't it be easier just to put your hand inside the bass drum and take the ring out by hand? Then Frank starts hitting the other drums, and the PA guy talks about more rings. Geez, I think, this drum has lots of rings in it. Probably because they fell off Frank's hands. I mean, he was a sissy.

As I make my way to the stage to "check" my guitar, which really means just plugging it in and playing Sonic Reducer for like the umpteenth time, I see the guitarists from Minor Threat moving in their new Marshall Stacks on their skateboards. One of the guitarists has blonde hair, glasses, and some weird tattoos that I really can't make out from the distance, but they look familiar, and the other guitarist is wearing a golfing jacket, and has slicked back brown hair.

"Pussies," I think to myself.

I check my guitar with Sonic Reducer, and then walk off stage for the PA guy to finish so the whole Roach Motel can sound check. I walk over to where the guitarists are standing with their new Marshall Stacks and introduce myself.

"Hi, I'm George from Roach Motel, you guys must be from Minor Threat," I say.

They just look at me.

"How was your trip?" I ask.

Again they just look at me.

"You are Minor Threat, aren't you?" I ask, somewhat agitated. They just look at me and tilt their heads sideways, like my bird.

"Wally," I say, "are you gonna shit on my Flex Your Head again?"

Now the guys look and me and ask if I am crazy. I tell them I am not, that I am in Roach Motel.

"Oh," they both say in unison. Strange fellows.

So I say to the blonde guy, "What's that tattoo on your arm?" He shows it to me. It is the Coca-Cola logo. Tattooed on his arm.

Nice, I thought.

"Nice," I said.

"Ya think so?" he asks?

"Yes," I lie.

"Cool, my name is Brian Baker, and I play guitar in Minor Threat," he tells me.

I ask him why Coca-Cola and not Pepsi, or even better, Budweiser or something? He tells me he likes Coca-Cola, and that he is straight edge. The other guy says that he is too. I later find out his name is Lyle Preslar.

"Straight edge?" I ask, "What is that? Like ya carry around knives and stuff? Or you all have rulers in your pockets and ya like to measure things?"

That I could see. I mean, shit, these guys dressed like dorks, and they were probably good in math. They probably even had pen protectors somewhere, and had those slide ruler things.

"No, not like that," explained Lyle, "We are straight edge, meaning we don't like to drink or smoke or have sex."

"What?" I yelled, "You don't drink, smoke, or even wanna get laid?"

"That's right," said Brian. So I yelled for John McQuiggan to get his ass over here. He came skating over.

"John," I said, "these guys don't drink, smoke, or have sex." John told me that is what "straight edge" was. I told John he was nuts. Then I turned to the two guitarists with the Izod shirts and asked them why.

But I really didn't have to. I could see that they probably didn't drink because they didn't like the taste of it and were probably underage, they didn't smoke because their mommies and daddies would ground them, and as for sex, who'd fuck these geeks, anyway? Lyle then informed me it was because the band didn't believe in that sort of "stuff". What fuckin' ever.

Finally, Roach Motel sound checked, then we moved our equipment to the side of the stage so Minor Threat could set up.

"This I gotta see", I told John. He told me to just wait, and I'd see how great they were.

As they set up I couldn't help but think, where in the hell did these bozos get new Marshall Stacks?

That's when they took out their guitars.

Holy Fuck! They had Les Pauls. Geezus.

They had thousands of dollars worth of equipment. I had a lousy Carvin amp, a shitty Vantage Flying V, and they had fucking top of the line equipment. Whoa.

Then the drummer guy started to do what Frank had just done. Beat his drums, while the PA guy yelled about "rings" in the drum set. The drummer kept hitting the drums, and would play little fills. He sounded really good.

Then it was the bass player's turn. He was this little bald guy named Steve, I think, and was really polite. He had helped me move my amp off stage and seemed very cool. He played a couple of bass lines and he sounded awesome.

Then it was the guitarists who were up next. They played some riffs and sounded like I had never heard a band sound before. Well, any punk band, that is. Their guitars sounded like AC/DC, which in my book was fucking great. Almost up there with the Nuge. That's what our guitarist Jeff, later told me.

Then it was time for the singer. Lyle kept yelling in the mike for Ian. Then he asked if anyone had seen him. John told him that he went up the street a while a go, and he should be back soon. So the band fiddled with their equipment some more, then Brian started skateboarding around the hall. He was pretty good. He did some 360s and tic-tacked well. He challenged me to a race, and we both skated around and around the club. Finally, Ian showed up and they sound checked.

And do I have to say they fuckin' rocked?

The band did a few songs, and I never heard a band sound tighter or louder. These guys were the shit. Period.

They played all this complicated stuff, and didn't even get lost. Not even once. Shit, Roach Motel was lucky if we only got lost twice in one song. These guys made no mistakes.

And the singer guy, Ian, was fucking great. He'd scream into the mike, run around, and was fucking punk rock. Now I could see why Bob and John really liked them. They had energy. Energy like I had never seen before. Here they were, before they were on stage, these little mousy guys with alligator shirts and new pants and sneakers, very quiet and all. But when they plugged in and started playing, holy shit. Rage with a mighty roar. Like I'd never heard or seen before. Or since.

So after they get done playing, they move their stuff so John's band can set up. I go outside and that Ian fellow follows me out. I tell him I think they are great.

Ian says, "Thanks, George." Polite guy.

Then I ask him if he is "straight edge" too?

He tells me he is, and he is because it makes him feel better and more alert. He tells me that all the energy he could be wasting on drugs and booze, he puts toward his stage act and his singing and songwriting. I tell him that I could see that, and that they had more energy than anyone I have ever seen. I asked him if he too didn't have sex, and he said yes.

Wow.

*

Later that night Minor Threat played a fucking great set. By the time Roach Motel got on, the audience was whipped into a fury, and we rocked as well. But nothing like Minor Threat. They changed the way I thought about them, and the punk rock.

Forever.

These guys were great. I thought about them as I played "Pizza Face" and "Now Your Gonna Die" on my shit-ass flying V. The whole time I was playing, Brian and Lyle were down in the pit ruling me, putting two fingers in the air and yelling, "George, George, Guitar God."

Those guys were certainly okay in my book for dudes who didn't drink, drug, or fuck.

And they were funny too. When we broke into "Born to Be Wild" they hopped up and stage and sang along with Bob. Even Ian joined in.

"Awesome", I thought.

After the show I asked them if I could buy their 7" record. They had a few left, and sold me one for a couple of bucks. It was this blue 45 with some skinhead or something on the cover, and a leather jacket on the back, with a guy with a cork for a head. It looked cool.

I told the band I really liked them and we should hang out. They said that would be great, and they'd be in town for a while, and as it turns out, they were staying with Bob. I told them that was cool, then asked them to sign my newly purchased record.

They laughed, and wrote silly things on it like "To George, my fave axe man —Brian Baker," or "Flying V—What more can you say? —Lyle Preslar", or "Van Halen? Nope, it's George! —Ian MacKaye," etc.

Hehe.

These guys were funny. Then they asked me to sign some of their Roach Motel records, and I wrote stuff like "Go get laid —George Tabb" and "Have a drink, wussy! —George Tabb" and stuff

like that. We all had a good laugh.

*

As we were finishing loading up the equipment Ian and I had a few seconds alone together. I told him I really enjoyed his band, and that I was looking forward to the upcoming gigs we were doing together. He told me he was as well. I then asked him if my drinking offended him. Because, in reality, I'd never want to hurt someone's feelings.

"George," he replied, "straight edge is something I do for myself. Something personal. I would never tell anyone else how to live their lives, or what do to."

He then went on to tell me that he didn't care if I drank, and to have lots of fun.

I told him that that was cool, and thanks for, well, being him.

We did a few more shows together, and had a fucking blast. We all became better friends, and I really grew to like those guys in Izod shirts. If my memory serves me correctly, I think I even remember Ian buying me some beers at Reality Kitchen, a club we played together. But don't hold me to that. Ask him.

And tell him I say "Hello!"

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. www.georgetabb.com
2. Surfing Armageddon. Get it, live it, and spread the word. Unless you are a hot chick. Then spread your legs.
3. Got some cool new CDs in the mail. They include ones from the likes of Motorcity Losers, whose tune, "Cinder in the Street," rocks my world. Also, the new EP from Love Letters And Gravestones is much better than their silly name. Hell, their first tune, "Under the Black Flag," says it all. Then there's Smoky Mountain Skullbuster who *will* fuck with your brain. Rock on, dudes! Greenhaven has a new CD called *The Last Powerful Second* which actually touches me. In a good way. And then there's Infradig, ex-members of NYC's most, well, strange band, White Plastic. I must admit I like this new stuff better. I also like the *Victims of the Modern Age* compilation. And not just 'cause Furious George is on it, but also 'cause it features Teenage Supplicants, Kid Dynamite, Blanks 77, the Microwave Orphans and some band called Yellowcard I never heard of. Also got the Give-Ups EPs. Punk Fuckin' Rock!
4. In the world of video gaming, check out the new "Castlevania" for the Nintendo DS, although the PSP is a better machine. Also check out the kiddy titles from THQ, especially if you've managed to reproduce. They are fun for everyone.
5. Finally, yeah, I just had more surgery, then tripped over a machine I'm hooked up to that is sucking my guts out. I broke my rib. And it hurt. But nothing like the emotional pain loved ones can inflict upon each other. Sometimes the Ramones song, "Poison Heart" runs through my brain. "I just want to walk, right out of this world, because everybody has a poison heart" seems way too true at times. But then I remember *Maximumrocknroll*, and the hope that punk rock has always promised and always will. And it makes me feel better. Because without it, a lot of us would be lost.
6. Punk Rock!

Alright, time to get cracking—seems like the more free time I have, the worse my procrastination gets. I assume it's the same for everyone. To counter that…

I mentioned a couple releases on my year-end top ten that would've made the list had I had a chance to spin 'em a few more times, the first of which is France's GOJIRA with their *From Mars to Sirius* on Listenable Records (www.listenable.net). Not really the kind of thing I normally get into, GOJIRA is often melodic, but they succeed where so much other Euro-metal falls flat. Steer-clear terms like "mid-pace" and "grooving" could also apply, but GOJIRA are still plenty brutal, writing memorable, crushingly heavy tunes without the intent of conventionality—maybe like an odd melodic mix of MESHUGGAH and MORBID ANGEL. They also have a strong environmental message running throughout, paying homage to every Greenpeace and *Star Trek IV* fan's love of whales as emblems of the environment and its destruction. You gotta be a pretty sick metal band to put a great big whale on your cover, incorporate whale songs into your tunes, and still pull off the heaviness. It's as good as it shouldn't be.

The second almost-made-the-list band is CONFESSOR, with their long-awaited *Unraveled*, on Season of Mist Records (www.season-of-mist.com, by the way, the most ridiculous website ever). *Unraveled* is their first full-length record since breaking up fourteen years ago, after their only other full-length, *Condemned* came out on Earache in 1991. Newly reformed, the North Carolina natives craft some of the most bizarre songs I've heard, particularly in the normally limited arena of stoner/doom metal. This is technical stoner doom/thrash, the seemingly straight-forward guitars and vocals undercut with impossible to follow off-time drum madness. The guitars also have plenty of quick thrashing moments, bringing to mind an extinct '80s sound and style that perfectly complements the drums. And for a singer who actually sings, the vocals are surprisingly decent as well. It's really the speed, or rather the lack thereof, that's craziest about these guys—this is undoubtedly the slowest super-technical record ever—I don't think I've ever heard a band play quite like this.

Speaking of old Earache bands, death metal dinosaurs BOLT THROWER return with their eighth full-length *Those Once Loyal* on Metal Blade. The AC/DC of death metal, you'd be hard-pressed to say BOLT THROWER has changed much, and that's always a good thing, though the few slight changes they have made are a tad worrying. On tracks like "The Killchain" and parts of "Last Stand of Humanity," they seem to be incorporating an almost WHITE ZOMBIE-esque mid-pace Oz-Fest groove. Honestly, I laughed when the main riff of "Killchain" kicked in. But despite the déjà vu of feeling like I'd heard most of these riffs before, I still love what they do and there are as many killer steam-rolling war-tank riffs as any other of their records and it's still a happy day whenever a new BOLT THROWER disc detonates upon us.

Lingering in the realm of death metal, I got a couple new releases from Italy's The Spew Records (www.thespew.org). CADAVERIC CREMATORIUM is a relatively new Italian death/grind five-piece, delivering their second full-length, *Serial Grinder*. Having multiple songs about zombies, they've obviously found a happy home with this columnist, but so should they with anyone into seriously talented extreme music. Sounding perhaps like a cross between SUFFOCATION and CRIPPLE BASTARDS, these guys play a perfect blend of death and grind, with plenty of black humor and weird twists to their compositions. This is fierce, chaotic, high-energy stuff with endless changes per song, all executed with surgical precision. It's not really on the tech angle though—more that they just have a million riffs and the musical chops to transition between them flawlessly. With recent killer stuff reviewed in these pages from the likes of CRIPPLE BASTARDS, DYSMORFIC, PSYCHOFAGIST, and now these guys- sounds like Italy's got quite an interesting little grind scene at the moment.

Also on The Spew comes another newcomer, Sweden's DEVIANT, with their debut full-length, *Larvaeon*. DEVIANT makes me realize how rare it is for a Swedish death metal band to not sound like Swedish death metal. Expecting some AT THE GATES or ENTOMBED type material, I was instead greeted to bleak, disharmonic, old-school death like a mix of the American and Polish sounds, e.g. IMMOLATION and VADER. Not terribly complicated arrangements but they have a huge wicked guitar sound, especially on tracks like, "Tools of Termination." They've still got a little work to do to distinguish themselves from the masses, but for a first outing from a young band, this is a promising debut of punishing heaviness.

Equally heavy, but put to completely different effect is OCEAN's *Here Where Nothing Grows*, a three-song offering upon the altar of CORRUPTED sludge worship on the typically very non-metal Important Records (www.importantrecords.com). With songs averaging above the twenty-minute mark, each track is a mini-epic, a journey unto itself, and sometimes it feels like you've been on the same three-note riff for eternity. It takes multiple listens to "crack" the songs, to think it's more than just aimless plodding, but having done so myself, I have to report the glacial pace is rewarding in time, especially the final third of second track, "Salt." There is a purpose to the meandering, with a few key transitions, whether it be to extra heaviness or a complementary melody, and the sound is wonderful-

ly massive along the way. Definitely something for the depressive doom fans.

Speaking of songs set to the pace of the ice age, I recently picked up the split LP from THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE and WARZONE WOMYN at the BLOCKADE's fucking incredible performance at the Super Sabado Fest this winter. Let it be an indication of how much I love this band that I was OK with shelling out ten bucks for a record with one extended song on their side, but fortunately two things made it worthwhile: Side A and Side B. The BLOCKADE song is godly. "Island," is one eighteen and a half minute track of epic proportions—sparse and menacing initially, it gradually shifts through various stages, as different riffs metastasize and the vocals kick in. It speeds up by the end, but this is all about immense, lugubrious doom that takes me back to the first time I heard GRIEF.
On the flipside, I'd never even heard of WARZONE WOMYN before, but I figured anyone sharing a record with BLOCKADE had to be pretty devastating in their own right, and I was right. Pittsburgh's WARZONE WOMYN deliver thirteen tracks of blistering power violence with killer transitions from slow to fast, scathing vocals and songs that are gone in the blink of an eye. A throwback to old MAN IS THE BASTARD, INFEST and shit, maybe even a little MONSTER X, this is killer speed and fury and the perfect complement to BLOCKADE's tar pit crawl. This is a limited second press of the LP—looks like no discernable label, but *MRR*'s Mantooth (who uncoincidentally sings for the WOMYN) suggests outoflimits@gmail.com or Ebullition to get one.

Keeping things slow, we come to the new album by one of the progenitors of stoner doom in the early nineties, EARTH. *Hex: Or Printing in the Infernal Method* (Southern Lord), is EARTH's first real album in almost ten years. It's not such a daring feat for a band to reform at a time when so many bands are currently getting huge by biting their shtick (obviously SUNN), but that's where the new direction of *Hex* is really quite admirable. I would be the first to run screaming from the term "country-drone" but somehow, EARTH has managed to add country guitar-twang and make it totally fucking work. The songs are still codeine-drippingly *slooooooow*, and like later, shittier EARTH, most songs have drum accompaniment, but the effect is very much like *Earth 2*, without sounding anything like it. The overall ambience is actually closest I'd say to NEIL YOUNG's epic soundscapes created for the *Dead Man* soundtrack—sparse, resonate washes of guitar distortion accompanied by lap steel and other implements. I'm sure there are plenty out there who'll hate it and long for *Earth Part 4* (a real one, not the awful *Pentastar*), and I thought I'd be among them, but really, *Hex* is just…purty.

Also on a decidedly non-metallic tack, I'll risk alienating more people by mentioning my first emo band in this column, Half Moon Bay's FUNERAL DINER. Their latest full-length release, *The Underdark* (Alone Records, www.alonerecords.com) has been out for almost a year now, but I still think it's worth mentioning as a band that may be of interest to people who typically can't stand emo (like myself for instance). I just saw them live again for the first time in a while, and they're just an amazingly intense live band, and it carries over to their recorded work. This is my favorite record of theirs so far and it's got a great dark heavy sound and plenty of interesting instrumental work on the increasingly longer, epic songs. May not be everyone's cup of tea, but if you're feeling adventurous (or moody), check em out.

Back to more standard Zombie fare, Germany's RSR Records has three new EPs out that are sure to be of interest to regular readers. First up, the UZI SUICIDE / PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER 7". UZI SUICIDE continues in the fine lineage of Bay Area thrash / power violence bands with super short songs, wacky lyrics, tons of energy and great drumming. PRETTY LITTLE FLOWER (whose drummer is also in INSECT WARFARE) from Texas, has been around for a while but have relatively few proper releases. This one is well worth the wait—five songs of brutal metallic grind with a nice '80s thrash metal feel on songs like "As the Grass Grows."

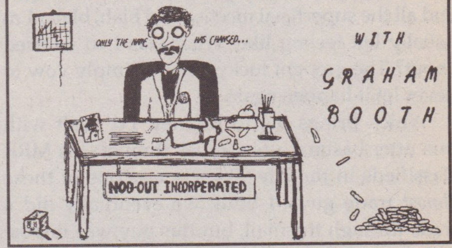
Next up is the MAGRUDERGRIND / SANITYS DAWN split. Maryland's MAGRUDERGRIND just get heavier and more intense with each release. The opening track, "A Reaction with a Steak Knife" in particular just storms out the gate with blistering high and low vocals and searing blast beats. The other tracks are more at a thrash / power violence speed, but still the heaviness remains. SANITYS DAWN, from Germany, have been laying low since their great split CD with FETUS EATERS—they too are back in fine form with three tracks of high-energy noisy distorted grind with catchy break-downs and a not-too-serious tone.

And then there's the HATRED SURGE / INSECT WARFARE split 7" that I previously raved about in the regular review pages. It's worth a second mention though—both of these Texan grind bands are just too tough for their own good—serious brutality from both bands. It's hard to pick a favorite, though on most recent listen, it was HATRED SURGE with their "despising you" male/female trade-off vocals. Great stuff from all the above bands; RSR keeps putting out the hits (http://members.tripod.de/skrupel).

Lastly, a quick mention about a couple new releases from San Francisco's Tankcrimes Records (karaterex.com/tankcrimes), whom I've said plenty niceties about before and will continue to do so, so long as Scotty swears not to wear his white, youth-crew sweatshirt anymore. Creeps me out. First, there's the CD version of the *At the Throats of Man* EP from SF's own POPULATION REDUCTION, which I raved about last summer upon its vinyl release. This CD adds the *Terror Tactics* demo from '02, a full live radio set from '01 and a cover of SPAWN OF SATAN. As stated before, this is killer death/grind not to be missed—look out for their *Each Birth a New Disaster* full-length coming soon on Tankcrimes too. Lastly, we get INSTANT ASSHOLE's *Straight Edge Failure*, a collection of ripping punk from Burnt Ramen's John the Baptist and crew—as ugly, grimy and beer-soaked as the shitter in Burnt Ramen's bathroom. Old school MDC-style for the ringworm-ridden alcoholic crusty in you, these 17 tracks are catchier than scabies on a Burnt Ramen couch. Ha ha, these Burnt Ramen metaphors are just too easy and it's too close to deadline to care…

That's it this month. As always, send anything for review in this column to: Elliott Lange, 1320 Fulton St., San Francisco CA 94117, South of Canada, cromlaughs@hotmail.com

ROCKET TO NOWHERE



Get ready...it's column time again! OK, losers, I'm currently rockin' out to Australia's finest by-product, RAZAR, at excruciatingly low volumes. The neighbors have complained...can you believe those racists can't appreciate my exotic tastes for the music of the South Pacific? Ah well, I should be punching myself for listening to this musak in MP3 format. I'm still without a working record player, so for now my pristine yellow label copy of *Stamp Out Disco*—in the original sleeve, mind you—will have to sit on the shelves. Whatta monster!

On that note, I stumbled upon a treasure trove of rare punk MP3s recently at www.7inchpunk.com. If you can't find what you want there, follow the links to other music blogs—it's amazing how many really obscure and overlooked records are popping up on-line. Heck, nowadays you don't have to pay money to hear or see impossibly rare records. You have no excuse not to become an expert—immediately.

Seriously, if I hadn't already wasted ten years of my life digging these records out of the most depressing places on earth, there'd be no reason to start now. With iTunes, I get all the songs I want and an adorable little photo of the label art and sleeve. No worrying about condition, no tearing apart your apartment trying to find that misplaced record, and you can delete all the bad songs. Set it on shuffle and you've got the ultimate mix tape.

What are you waiting for?

Now all I need is this newfangled USB record player being unveiled in June. Yes, a record player with a USB adaptor! Sorry to, like, get all corporate, but check out amazon.com for details. Tew kewl! But now, on to more important crapola...

Nothing drives record collecting better than a healthy dose of competition. Take one interesting lead, put two people head to head, and it's amazing what can be uncovered in a surprisingly short amount of time. Let's face it—people are really fucking lazy. However, the prospect of one-upping a good friend, let alone an archenemy, is enough to get most people's blood pumping. No doubt, without competition, a helluva lot more records would be rotting in landfills right now.

This is also where collecting personalities really get interesting. Some of my best friends started out as suspicious rival collectors. To finally put a face on that mysterious persona who's been scooping you on all the good records is a strange experience. My initial hatred and disgust is usually tempered by a sullen admiration while I size up who I'm up against. Often I've already dealt with the person through trading (or *almost* trading), but nothing can really prepare you for that first meeting face to face. Stories are exchanged and all the superficial niceties and blah, blah...I'm usually left feeling like, What was I so worried about? The guy got lucky. Then I simply vow to never let it happen again.

Which brings me to Rodney. I'd dealt with this utter bastard a few times through his MRR classifieds in the late 90's. He was one of those *almost* trade guys. I think we eventually did a trade through the mail, but this guy was impossible to deal with. I'm not sure what I was thinking, but I let him know I'd be moving to his neighborhood in the fall for school. As my arrival approached, he agreed to meet me on my first night in town at Kinko's—he worked there.

He looked nothing like I expected. He had a rather exotic last name, so I was a bit taken aback to see such a white-bread guy. His Kinko's uniform certainly helped, but he was classic Poindexter material: tall, skinny, glasses, short-cropped hair—or what was left of it. At 25, he was the first "punk" I met that used Rogaine. I'm sure he was thinking the same thing I was: "*this* guy collects *punk* records?"

We exchanged war stories, and it turned out we'd dealt with many of the same people. He dropped the "Rob Noxious" bomb, and I mentioned that I'd always avoided dealing with him: "I made all of his trade lists. The guy is crazy, but he gave me good records for what must've been hundreds of dollars in copies." We talked about records...what we had, what we didn't. Both of us were obsessively collecting early 80's hardcore records at that point.

He bragged about his good fortune locally: a notorious 80's scenester gone junkie had been consistently unloading some intense stomach-churning gems to a local store on an almost daily basis to pay for his healthy junk habit. Seems Rodney had stumbled onto an almost complete run of early *Touch & Go* magazines to go along with his two NEGATIVE APPROACH test pressings and two NECROS skate park sleeves. I can't imagine what he paid for all of it, but if you count the friend discount, it probably wasn't more than $300 for the entire batch. Not bad on a Kinko's salary. Thankfully I already had a FIX *Vengeance* and a MINOR THREAT *Out of Step* test pressing with the silk-screened cover to hold over his head at that point.

As sickened as I was, we got along famously. We started hanging out on a daily basis. So began my most intense era of accumulating records. Now I had a cohort, and pretty much nothing else to do in my spare time. Armed with the same basic want-list, we were both determined to get all of the records on it—first! Remember, both of us were pretty broke—I was a student, after all—so this was a test of resourcefulness, not a buying spree.

And during that year, we got some sick records. Between us we must have collected pretty much every U.S. hardcore record besides NECROS *Sex Drive*, plus most of the essential Scandinavian and Italian and Brazilian hardcore EPs. I can particularly remember groans over the ANTI-CIMEX *Anarchist Attack* 7", the ANTIDOTE 7", AGNOSTIC FRONT 7", BIG BOYS 7" and LP, CHRONIC SICK 7", DIE KREUZEN 7" (yellow sleeve), EU'S ARSE 7", FEAR's *I Love Livin' in the City* 7", the FIX *Jan's Rooms* 7", a KORO 7", MINOR THREAT's first-press, all the MISFITS 7"s including *Cough Cool* and *Bullet* (first-press), NABAT's first 7", NEGATIVE APPROACH 7" (colored sleeve), NEON CHRIST 7", OLHO SECO 7", PROJECT X 7", RAW POWER first LP, TEEN IDLES first-press 7", URBAN WASTE 7", and the WRETCHED/INDIGESTI 7". This was more than one person could ever hope to accomplish in one year.

I finished up school in May of 2000 and moved away shortly afterwards. Rodney and I kept in touch, but a few months later he mentioned that he had lost interest in collecting since I left. I was still into it, but I agreed—the momentum was lost. Of course, by then I had moved on to my next cohort. More on that one in another column.

(Attention SS: Did I mention the EXECUTE *A-Z* flexi yet?)

About a year after I moved away, Rodney finally managed to track down his top want, a FIX *Vengeance* 7". Within a few months, he decided he was done with collecting. He literally sold everything! It was painful to watch, and I felt too weird about it all to bother getting anything for myself. He apparently made a lot of money. I heard he used it as a down payment on a car.

Last I heard from Rodney he was living in Vermont in a one-room apartment with a cat, a thing for folk music, and a lot less hair. I think he was going for that scary bald hippie comb-over look, but I guess that reclusive vibe is in these days. He said that he'd listened to hardcore recently, but it sounded too amateurish and elementary for his refined tastes. Whatever floats your boat, I guess. I just hope he looks back to those glory days of punk collecting as happily as I do.

Is DIY Business Still Gentrification? Gay Shame and the Politics of Accountability

It was Saturday night, and 14th Street was blowing up... The electroclash kids were streaming in and out... Skaters, bike messengers, and indie rockers gathered under the neon sign of the evangelical church that declares, "God is not dead." It was just another Saturday night on 14th Street between Valencia and Guerrero, but it was also the beginning of something big.

—San Francisco Bay Guardian, February 23, 2005

The article above, "Evolution on 14th Street," appears in San Francisco's "progressive" weekly newspaper, and rhapsodizes over four trendy new businesses—a zine store, an art gallery, a record store, and a bike shop. The article continues, "Fourteenth Street is quickly emerging as the new epicenter of the Mission District arts and DIY scene, or a 'hipster mini-mall'... It looks like the old Mission might be back." The article praises the cooperative spirit of the new business owners, and states, "Gentrification certainly isn't news. But coming up with a successful formula to combat it, as has been established on this emerging block, is."

But gentrification *is* news, especially when discussing a "hipster mini-mall" emerging literally a few hundred feet from the former site of public housing. In November 2003, Valencia Gardens, one of the last remaining large-scale public housing projects in central San Francisco, was demolished to make way for a new, $66 million development that will allegedly house all the original residents, as well as higher-end "low-income" tenants who earn up to $95,000 year. In the meantime, former residents of Valencia Gardens, many who lived there for decades, received Section-8 housing vouchers just before federal funding for Section 8 was cut by $1.6 billion. Many have since become homeless or marginally housed.

Since the early 1990s, the Mission has been a central battleground in San Francisco's gentrification wars, especially during the mid-90's dot-com boom when working class Latino families were made homeless daily and artists and activists were evicted to make way for luxury loft development (a pattern which continues in spite of the dot-com crash). When the *Bay Guardian* states, "It looks like the old Mission might be back," they glorify the white hipster gentrification of the late 1980s and early 1990s that made the Mission safe for urban professionals on the down-low. The *Bay Guardian* neglects to mention the Latino families who have formed the backbone of the Mission for a generation, or the poor, mostly black residents of Valencia Gardens who formerly lived around the corner from 14th Street. Instead, the article promotes four new white indie stores as "a community of collaboration."

Gay Shame began as a radical alternative to the consumerism, blind patriotism, and assimilationist agenda of mainstream pride celebrations. Instead of target-marketing overpriced crap to gay consumers, we wanted to create a free space where queers could celebrate outsider identities, make culture on our own terms, and share skills and strategies for resistance. Gay Shame emerged in New York City in 1998, inspiring like-minded activists to create similar events, many of them calling themselves "Gay Shame," across the U.S. and around the world.

In San Francisco, Gay Shame has morphed

from a once-a-year confrontation of Pride to a year-round direct action extravaganza. We challenge not only the consumerism, complacency, and corporatization of gay people with power, but the ways in which a gay elite uses its new-found "success" to oppress less privileged queers, homeless people, sex workers, people of color, and anyone else who might get in the way of gentrification. We consistently target pro-development, anti-poor San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, as well as endless US war and police brutality. We confront all hypocrites, not just yuppies in SUVs and politicians in pressed suits, but also those closer to our own social circles. We constantly wheatpaste flyers around the city, addressing issues as diverse as public sex (we love it), biotechnology (we hate it), urban "renewal" (it's a scam), and marriage ("Gay Shame Opposes Marriage in Any Form").

Lately, Gay Shame has focused on stenciling sidewalks across the city with radical queer slogans. Generally, we create simple messages to remind people of our core values, such as "End Marriage," "End Prisons," and "All Property Is Valueless." Our latest stencil took a little bit of time to concoct, and so perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised when it ignited controversy.

Gay Shame believes that community building involves more than providing cool places to show art, buy records, and party. In fact, artsy "Do-It-Yourself" spaces draw white yuppies to edgy neighborhoods in the first place—a new luxury loft building recently appeared on the same block as the 14th Street "hipster mini-mall." To address the often-unacknowledged partnership of hipsters and yuppies, we decided on a stencil saying, "DIY Business = DIY Gentrification." We wanted to keep the message succinct and legible, and we planned on using it in several relevant neighborhoods. At our next meeting, however, we became embroiled in a discussion of just what we meant by "DIY" and "gentrification," why we were targeting DIY businesses in particular, and whether our message was too vague. We talked about the roles that many of us play in gentrification, and why it was important to critique those within our own circles. If we couldn't critique DIY business, then who would?

We amended the stencil to read, "DIY Business Is Still Gentrification," and agreed to create a second stencil addressing larger issues of gentrification, so that we weren't only targeting DIY businesses. Since we couldn't immediately figure out a suitable slogan for the new stencil, we decided to start by stenciling the first message on 14th Street and along the Valencia Street corridor, where many of the hippest businesses in the Mission reside. Stenciling went mostly as planned, and soon the sidewalk outside many neighborhood businesses contained a new message in red spraypaint.

To the surprise of some of us in Gay Shame, our stencil appeared directly in front of the doorway to Modern Times Bookstore, a radical-leaning "collectively-owned and operated" store open since 1971. Though Modern Times may have played a role in the early years of Mission gentrification, the store constantly struggles to stay in business, and could become a gentrification casualty. Gay Shame also happens to meet every Saturday at Modern Times.

Gay Shame operates by consensus, and we generally address controversial ideas ahead of time. No one had suggested stenciling outside Modern Times at our Saturday meeting. Nevertheless, we did agree to stencil on Valencia, where Modern Times is located, and we did not specifically exempt Modern Times from the festivities. Gay Shame operates smoothly precisely because we try not to get caught up in endless processing. One of the perils of a swift consensus is that sometimes we neglect to address all sides of an issue, and the potential ramifications of our actions.

If some of us in Gay Shame were upset about the stencil outside Modern Times, some of the people who work at the store were livid. The reception we received upon arrival at our next meeting was dour, and one store worker, Amanda Davidson, informed us that she would like to attend our meeting to voice the concerns of Modern Times staff. Before the meeting began, we received another surprise attendee: Andrew Scott, co-owner of Needles and Pens, the zine store/art gallery credited in the *Bay Guardian* with starting the 14th Street DIY revolution.

Scott began by asking why we were attacking his store, why we hadn't approached him first, what we wanted the store to do about gentrification. It would be great if Gay Shame could conceive of a "solution" for gentrification, but we don't pretend to have the answers. In this case we were instigating a first step: challenging DIY business owners and patrons to acknowledge their role in gentrification.

Andrew continued, "Our store is the only store with DIY in the title, so obviously you were attacking us." Andrew's feelings of DIY ownership were somewhat surprising. Many of us are actually glad the store exists, but that doesn't prevent us from critiquing it. Andrew continued, "We exist primarily to create a community space for our friends, we both have other jobs to support ourselves and don't even make rent. Would you have done this to the Bearded Lady or Black and Blue Tattoo?" The Bearded Lady and Black and Blue Tattoo were queer-owned businesses that existed on the 14th Street strip before the current wave of "indie culture." Since Gay Shame emerged specifically to confront the hypocrisy of other queers, we would certainly not have shied away from holding queer-owned businesses accountable for gentrification.

Amanda pointed out that Modern Times also does not make rent, and has been around since 1971, before many Gay Shame organizers were born and decades before many of us arrived in San Francisco. She continued, "We are definitely committed to talking about issues of gentrification, and would be glad to figure out a suitable forum. We do provide Gay Shame with a free meeting space for a reason, but this particular method of dialogue could jeopardize that arrangement." Amanda encouraged us to attend the Modern Times staff meeting, since there were a variety of opinions among staff members.

The fact that Needles and Pens became so enraged by the Gay Shame stencil testifies to the stencil's effectiveness. Unfortunately, many DIY businesses and hipster consumers do not appreciate anything less than unquestioned loyalty. Gay Shame frequently encounters hostility for challenging inconsistencies; we consider this risk-taking a measure of our own integrity. Nevertheless, we do have a reputation for making rash decisions, and the stencil outside Modern Times did not improve our (usually undeserved) image. Nor did it help to articulate our politics—we ended up removing the stencil from the sidewalk with a toxic can of chemicals. Some within the group believed that we were backing down from our politics, but most of us were glad to find a remedy to an uncomfortable situation.

Gay Shame is known for our biting satire, and one organizer suggested a solution for Needles and Pens: we could spraypaint the stencil on canvas, and sell it in the gallery.

A note from Paul Curran, *MRR* Zine Coordinator:

Mattilda,

Thanks, this is good... Personally, I would've liked to hear you go deeper into what the intent was in the stenciling. If your point was to start a dialogue, I think that calling people out using stencils in their neighborhood is a pretty chickenshit way to go about it, if you don't mind my saying so. All of us leftists/anarchists/progressives have to live with the hypocrisy inherent in living in this capitalist society, but would you want someone calling bullshit on you for something like, I dunno...the fact that your books are made out of trees? That might be a topic that is worthy of debate, but what if it was just flyered all over your block: "Mattilda=deforestation"? I know I sound like a "can't we all just get along?"-type ninny, but the opposite attitude seems pretty counter-productive to me. Most of the time anyway... "The fact that Needles and Pens became so enraged by the Gay Shame stencil testifies to the stencil's effectiveness." Was enraging Needles and Pens the effect you were after?

—Paul

Mattilda responds:

Hi Paul—

Our intent with the Gay Shame stencil was quite simple: accountability. Gentrification thrives specifically by remaining invisible or camouflaging itself as neighborhood "improvement." Though DIY businesses may provide necessary space for culture-making and community-building, they also serve as gentrification on the DL, and unless this role is acknowledged, challenged, and transformed, gentrification will always appear "inevitable." I don't think gentrification is any more inevitable than other kinds of violence, though it is perhaps more sophisticated and systematic, and we must be equally relentless in our analysis and commitment to fighting it.

There is absolutely no reason why Needles and Pens could not welcome a sidewalk stencil saying, "DIY Business Is Still Gentrification" as a friendly improvement to the streetscape. Doesn't this stencil apply the tactics behind the products

Needles and Pens sells inside?

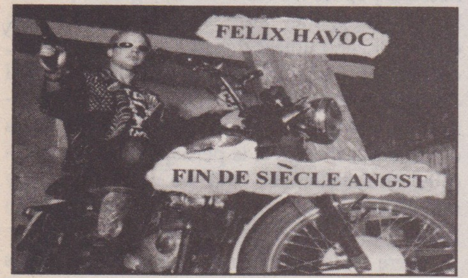
In the early '90s, as the deal was sealed on the Mission's transformation from a low-rent Latino neighborhood to a high-stakes hipstravaganza, I lived on an alley less than five blocks from the current location of Needles and Pens. I do not delude myself for a moment that my presence, as an alienated and politicized yet white and privileged resident, did not contribute to the fact that on that same alley there are currently at least three new condominium developments (and probably close to 50 such developments within a five-block radius). A basic acknowledgment of the role of marginalized white people, artists, queers, activists, etc. as a force of gentrification should not be seen as a threat to counterculture, but rather a starting point for resistance.

As for my (acknowledged) role in deforestation, I must point out that the Gay Shame stencil does not make any grandiose declarations about specific individuals, and I would certainly not be disturbed by a stencil outside my door that declared, "Writing Books Is Still Deforestation." Rather, this seems a self-evident assumption to underlie any literary endeavor, just as the statement "DIY Business Is Still Gentrification" should undergird any DIY foray into the commercial world.

In the service of a complete response, I'm not personally concerned with whether a tactic is perceived as "chickenshit," which I guess must be the opposite of "brave, strong, fight it out like a man," or "talk things through and come to a compromise like a mature citizen." One of the strengths of Gay Shame is that we are not afraid of talking about issues that actually matter instead of bowing to the false unity so common in supposed cultures of resistance. As for me personally, I find nothing more horrifying, depressing, alienating or heartbreaking than seeing brilliant, creative, and challenging people sucked into a zombified hipster mentality that sees a DIY aesthetic as the alternative to critical engagement.

Love,
Mattilda

Mattilda, aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore, is the editor, most recently, of *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* (Soft Skull) and the author of *Pulling Taffy* (Suspect Thoughts). Mattilda lives for feedback, so send love letters and/or delicious threats via the updated www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or write to PO Box 640047, San Francisco, CA 94164-0047.



If you ever take a writing class, the teacher usually says "write what you know." One thing I know is DC Hardcore. So lets get right to it.

This month I'd like to talk about a band that made a big impression on me as a youth, Government Issue. I started going to hardcore shows in DC kind of late, in 1983. At this point Minor Threat, Faith and Bad Brains were broken up. Void was arguably past their peak as well. But the one band that could seriously *bring it* on a weekly basis was Government Issue. Of the pantheon of DC hardcore bands I feel that GI took the longest to develop and hone their sound to it's most crucial. Their career can be viewed as a long arc, from sloppy teen hardcore punk, to most crucial hardcore, and then into psych alternative rock. Some may take umbrage at my assertions but I'm going to go out on a limb and say that *Make an Effort* EP and *Joy Ride* LP are GI at their peak. Everything before was just building it up, and everything after was just coming down from the high. That's not to say that I think early GI material is weak, just that the mid-period is so much more intense that it takes the sound to the next level.

GI had a long and productive career for an early '80s hardcore band. In fact they reinvented themselves towards the end as more of an indie/alt-rock/psychedelic band and were still gigging in the early '90s. I have eight different GI 7"s and nine LPs here by my stereo, and there could even be some less essential ones I'm missing. Compare this output to say Void, Artificial Peace, Deadline, or any other DC band and I think you'll find GI has had the most releases, excepting possibly the Bad Brains. Although some of their later material is spurious (remixes, live etc.)

GI's first demo has recently been released on vinyl. But I'm going to discuss demos, bootlegs, and outtakes in a later column. The reason for this is that most people found out about these bands through their vinyl releases and only after they became popular did more ancillary material get dug up and released.

Legless Bull was Dischord #4 released in the most heroic year of DC hardcore, 1981. Raw and boisterous, the early GI has a really snotty punk influence. John Stabb's lyrics are often wry and sarcastic as opposed to the more political, introspective, or anti social lyrics of other DC bands. "Rock N Roll Bullshit" is a great example of this sort of parody. The intro bust is rather Meatmen-esque. The pace of this record is actually pretty slow, the riffs are great and owe a lot to '77 UK punk. Also there is a strong influence here of early L.A. bands like Middle Class and Rhino 39. Notably the "really fast punk/early hardcore" style. "Bored to Death" and "No Rights" could almost be Cockney Rejects or other UK punk stompers' tunes if they weren't so fast and Stabb's lyrics so obnoxious. But they speed it up considerably on a few tracks and make the leap into full-on hardcore style. This record ends with the droner "Sheer Terror," which the band would re-record and re-release on several of their records, much to my dismay.

Government Issue's next release was a massive step forward. The *Boycott Stabb* LP was released in 1982 as a split release between Fountain of Youth and Dischord, the two most important DC labels. Indeed, the Dischord story has been told many times, but the Fountain of Youth tale is yet to be well chronicled—that's an interview I'd like to do. As with most of the DC classics, Don Zientera at Inner Ear produced this one. The first thing you notice about this record in comparison to the *Legless Bull* and *Flex Your Head* tracks is the massively more beefed up guitar sound. The songs on this release are mostly top shelf. Tom Lyle's guitar features a not-so-subtle influence from hard rock, but with all the intensity and energy of hardcore. "Hour of 1" "Lost In Limbo" and "Plain to See" are DC hardcore with some serious thought put into the riffage. Short and fast, but still sticking in your head for days. "Plain to See" especially stands out with its dope breakdown and wicked fast riff. I think "Happy People" is a pretty weak track though, and the world probably didn't need a second version of "Sheer Terror."

Later in 1982 Brian Baker came in on guitar and Tom Lyle switched to bass. This line up recorded the absolutely essential *Make An Effort* EP. This record holds a hallowed place in my record collection as it was the first hardcore record I ever bought. Three of the four songs on this record are solid gold hardcore classics. And the fourth song is another version of "Sheer Terror" which, albeit a good song, we've already heard twice now in GI's career. "Teenager in a Box" is an anti drunk driving anthem (GI was still nailed to the X at this point) and "No Way Out" tells the tale of an armed robber surrounded by the cops and waiting for the end. The duper dope bassline and jagged raw guitar riff perfectly capture the tension, hopelessness, and desperation of the song's protagonist. "Twisted Views" is a short fast ripper, which sounds faster and more ripping by preceding what's probably the best version of "Sheet Terror." There are probably five or six different pressings of this record by now, so if you are hunting one down maybe check a reference like *Flex* to make sure you don't get hosed on a repress masquerading as an original copy.

The last and—to my mind—best of the crucial GI recordings is the *Joy Ride* LP. This record came out in 1984. By this point most other early DC hardcore bands had broken up or changed their sound. But GI soldiered on. I used to go see them on a very regular basis as they seemed to always be playing around the DC area. Also, guitarist Tom Lyle had a radio show on college station WMUC to which I was a loyal listener. By the time *Joy Ride* rolled around Brian Baker was out of the picture and Tom Lyle was back on guitar. I think Lyle is every bit as good as Baker anyway and you really can't tell the difference between the guitar playing on this record and *Make an Effort*. I'm guessing Lyle wrote all these songs in any case. The guitar sound on this record is sizzling and meaty like hot bacon on the skillet. It's hard to listen to this record and *not* picture these songs being played in huge arenas in front of tens of thousands of fans. The guitar playing has a pronounced hard rock influence on this record with lots of palm muting. But the songs fail to step into metal or crossover territory. Instead they inhabit a domain of beefed up mid-tempo rocking hardcore that few bands successfully enter. I think only later Poison Idea gets this

sound right to the same degree. I find this record somewhat lop-sided, with side one nailing most of the best songs and side two having some quite notable filler. "Blending In," "Understand," and "Time to Escape" would rock any party from 1984 to the present. On the flip the title track is a banger and "Hall of Fame" and "Reflection" are solid, but no one needed to hear a cover of "These Boots Were Made For Walking" or yet another recorded version of "Sheer Terror." My guess is they had too many songs for a 7" and not enough for an LP so we got two clunkers. But don't let that stop you from blasting this rager. I still really need a copy of this on blue vinyl. I bought a copy at the record release show but it was stolen from my collection in the early '90s. If anyone has a copy to spare we can make a deal!

In 1985 GI released *The Fun Just Never Ends* and this is where their sound started to jump off the rails. There is still some great songwriting on this record and it's certainly still a hardcore record. But the pace has slowed somewhat, the guitar sound has gone from USDA pure beef, to low fat, and the rock influence is starting to sound a little too rock instead of just hardcore with a hard rock edge. I still like this record but coming after *Joy Ride* it seems like kind of a let down. I saw them do most of these songs live, and I can say they are much more intense in that setting. I think if they'd gone into the studio a little more amped or pissed off and brought the same guitar stack they used for *Joy Ride*, this record could have been just as good. I keep wanting to slide the pitch adjustor on my turntable up to speed these guys up. Thankfully, this record does *not* include any version of "Sheer Terror," but it does feature a remake of "Bored to Death" from the 7" that falls kind of flat and a cover of the Faith's "Trapped" at about half the speed the Faith played it at (and the Faith didn't play very fast).

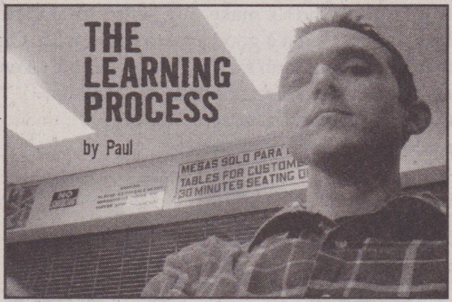
Somehow in this period GI got mixed up with Mystic Records. Mystic managed to milk five different records out of four studio tracks. All of which appear on different GI releases. *Give Us Stabb or Give Us Death* was released both as a 7" and as a 12". The only difference being the 12" included a live version of "Day of Reckoning." "Plain to See" appeared already on *Boycott Stabb* and "Blending In" is on *Joyride*. "Written Word" and "The Next Time" are on *The Fun Just Never Ends*. In addition to the 12" and 7" versions there is a 12" "Valu Pack" version, which contains a throwaway bonus 7" with two live tracks and an interview. Then later Mystic issued some of these 7"s with covers as Government Issue *Video Soundtrack* EP. Mystic also managed to finagle a live LP, *Live on Mystic*, out of these guys. I'm in the audience at three of the shows on this record. I assume they learned their lesson with Mystic, because the next three releases were back on Fountain of Youth.

I'm not going to talk about GI *s/t*, *Crash*, or *You* LPs. I'm not really into any of those records, but I know they are influential in the emo scene. I will just say that GI's sound progressed away from hardcore more into rock territory. The talent and songwriting was still great, but they were using their powers for another cause. I'm sure these are great records, and I love GI so much, I'm just going to avoid talking about them rather than say anything negative. Maybe someday my tastes will mature as well and I'll get more into those records, but for now, lets just stick to the hardcore.

GI spawned a legion of German bootleggers to issue the *Finale* LP, *No Way Out* 82 7" and *Fun and Games* 7". All are decent live records. But I personally think live hardcore records suck, so they are only for the superfan or completist.

If you are interested in the GI catalog and don't want to track down all the vinyl Dr. Strange has done us all the great service of releasing a GI discography on two CDs. There's some bonus material on the CDs as well and they are a great introduction to this important band.

There is also a long running Rumor that John Stabb is writing a book about GI. I've met Stabb a few times and he's a funny, eccentric, and down to earth guy. I'm sure this book will make great reading and a fresh perspective on the early '80s DC hardcore scene. This is a story that can be told from many viewpoints. And I will continue to tell it from the viewpoint of records next month.



Is Punk Rock Killing Business?

We started the ball rolling on this issue of *MRR* by posing a series of questions to our columnists and, in our feature "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?," to all kinds of people involved in the business end of punk. Naturally, this means we've mostly talked to people who do record labels, but we also got some responses from folks involved in things like distros, record stores, zine and book publishing, and screen-printing. We received so many great responses that we've had to split it into at least two parts! I hope you get something out of reading the article, and that you write to us with your opinions on the subject because I believe that this is an important, ongoing discussion we should be having in the pages of *Maximum Rocknroll*.

To consider how we do business in the punk community is to ponder our place in the greater capitalist system, and that is daunting to say the least. Economics is complicated and frustrating, and that complexity serves to maintain the status quo. The wealthy and powerful have rigged the game to keep themselves wealthy and powerful, and they create the illusion that there's nothing you can do to change that. They want you to think that you have no choice but to play by their rules. They want to destroy all the alternatives, leaving us with nothing but Wal-Marts and Starbuckses. A group of people that decides to build an economic structure outside of their grasp is a great threat to their power, not only because it cuts into their profits but, more importantly, because it sets an example. It shows others that an alternative is viable. Small-scale, community-based capitalism doesn't need them, and that pisses them off because if the idea grew, well, who knows what would happen?

Now I'm not suggesting that we, the punks, can destroy the system as we know it...wait, yes I am! Virtually everyone reading this magazine lives in a capitalist system, which means that, as Felix Havoc stated in his section of our cover feature, we vote with our money. How we make and spend our money has a much bigger effect on things than any election ever will... So how do we use this power? It's obvious to me that we start right here. We are punks: we live with other punks, we go to punk shows, we buy and sell punk records, we play punk rock, and we read, write, buy, sell, and trade punk zines. We can create our own mini-economy that can exist to a great extent outside of the system. What if we continue to seize this power that capitalism "gives" us by supporting ethical businesses based on trust, community, and values of anti-authoritarianism, gender and racial equality, and environmental sustainability? What if we have already started to do this? I believe that we have, and that we need to make a concerted effort to support each other and keep this going.

Some folks will scoff at this idea. You can't live outside of the capitalist system. No matter where you live, no matter what you buy or sell, you're still part of the huge organism that is the global economy and there's nothing you can do to change it. And that's absolutely true, except for the part about not being able to change it. We are all part of the organism, and that means it needs us as much as we need it. Each of us has *some* power that we can use however we wish. How are you using *your* power? Your time, your energy, your money, your property, your skills...think of all the punks and how many collective resources we have!

Everything we do in our lives has an effect on the system as a whole. Everything. Let's not ignore that.

***

I gotta give credit where credit is due. We already had the idea for a record labels roundtable, but it really became clear how well it could work when I read a piece called "What Makes a DIY Label DIY?" in *Mishap* fanzine #20, wherein Ryan Mishap printed replies to a series of questions about DIY-ness from a number of punk labels. It's a great read, and you can get a copy for "$4 ppd/trade/free if need be" from him at PO Box 5841, Eugene, OR 97405, or email mishapzine@yahoo.com. Thanks, Ryan!

Paul Goes Capitalist
or, Your Band Sucks!

In our feature article we posed the question "Is 'doing it yourself' only for those who can afford it? (i.e., What if you can't afford to buy your own tour van, have your band recorded, release your own records, etc.?)" and I was surprised that almost everyone responded with something like—or the exact phrase—"where there's a will, there's a way." It feels odd having such a rugged individualist, pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps

sentiment in this traditionally communo-anarcho-lefty magazine. I was even more surprised at how much I agreed with that, since I come from a world of class/privilege-conscious thinking where the "correct" answer to that question would be, "Yes, it's much easier for a white suburban American male to do those things because he will always have mom and dad and his trust fund to fall back on if it doesn't work out, and he has the white male-dominated power structure to support him." But the reality is that there are all kinds of people D-ing I Y all over the place with few resources and little money or support. It may be that in a strange way punk rock exists in a state of pure, unregulated capitalism. If you offer a product (e.g., a zine, a band, a record) that people want, you will probably be able to make enough money to support that project. In American "free market" capitalism, it's all based on having start-up money, publicity, advertising, political connections, etc. But in our world, you can scam a few copies, record your band on a boom box, put on a basement show, and if people are into what you do they will want more, and they will gladly give you money to have a little piece of it for themselves.

I actually like the way this level of capitalism works a lot. What has really bugged me lately, though, is the notion that all punk bands, distros, labels, and record stores are in some way entitled to earn a certain amount of money so that they can (I assume) keep punk rock alive (or something). Touring bands *have to* make gas money, so we *have to* charge more money for shows. Well, if people are willing to pay crazy prices for punk shows I suppose that's fair, but to me that is strong-arm capitalism. If people don't feel motivated to donate money and to buy your band's records and shirts, well, maybe your band just sucks.

I cringe when I read things like this, from a Dr. Strange Records email, about the demise of small independent record stores: "Follow the path we're on: 1) People burn and download CDs. 2) Many independent stores go under. 3) Independent punk bands no longer have a forum or label to release their stuff because there are no stores to support it. 4) Not so many bands are left, not so many record stores are left, and the scene dies away. 5) The only survivor of it? The bullshit poseur 'punk' bands on major labels." Wait a minute…punk is built on people purchasing CDs from record stores? Don't be fooled by this kind of false logic. If people stop playing punk rock because they're not getting paid for it, they were never punks to begin with, as far as I'm concerned. (And besides, they probably sucked!) Or if the problem is that so many people wanted to download or burn their songs, they're obviously a very popular band who should have no problem making money playing shows and selling shirts and (for the more discerning fans) vinyl… Downloading is good for punks and good for bands. Don't let them tell ya different.

All The Punks

We're gearing up for All the Punks 2006, which is in St. Louis on May 25th. What is All the Punks? Well, it's where all the punks go to St. Louis on May 25th, 2006!

What, you want more? We go, we hang out, we are the punks. What more do you need? I'm sure *something* will happen—we'll just have to wait and see what that is. The whole point, I think, is that it's not a planned-out event and no one is in charge. (It's not even really called "All the Punks," that's just what my friend Erin started calling it and it kinda stuck.)

If you're looking for good reasons to go: Well, it's in the middle of the country, so no matter where you are you probably don't have too far to travel. It's right near the beginning of summer so the weather will be beautiful. You don't have anything better to do (or if you do, I'm sure you can put off…). And *all the punks* will be there!

What should you bring? I plan on bringing some homebrew, a stack of MRRs, my skateboard, and just for fun I'm bringin' my new peace-punk band, Surrender… Okay, we'll already be on tour, but that's beside the point.

Worst April Fool's Joke Ever

Should I even bother to explain last month's poorly conceived April Fool's joke? I was trying to suggest that Don Knotts was not only a punk but a long-time *MRR* subscriber, and that he left us thousands of dollars in his will. Alas, the whole thing didn't make any sense to anyone and it wasn't even a good joke to begin with. On the plus side, I don't think many people even read my column last month so it's okay.

Communication is encouraged:
paul@maximumrocknroll.com

The MRR crew, Paul, and I first kicked around the idea of doing an issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* dedicated to the business side of punk—originally envisioning it as a follow-up to *MRR*'s much-referenced 1994 major label issue and later re-working it as a broader piece dealing with a number of ethical questions inherent in the punk scene—months and months ago, maybe even first bringing it up in the magazine close to a year ago. One thing that we discussed quite a bit in that time is what has changed for punk since that 1994 issue, and what hasn't. Since the early '90s the influence of big business on the punk scene has not only increased, but has in some ways become so pervasive that it seems that people have stopped noticing it, or noticing how it affects our scene. It's true that the landscape is different than in those post-Nirvana and Green Day years; corporate labels are no longer scour the indies for the "next big thing," and the mainstream media's conception of punk is so far from ours as to be completely unrecognizable. It makes sense—why bother with the Blake Schwartzenbachs of the world when there are a zillion clean-cut mall "punk bands" to manufacture and market? Nonetheless, punk as we know it still makes dangerous liaisons with corporate influence. Truly independent record distribution has become something of a scarcity, and the number of gray areas a band or label can exist in have seemingly multiplied tenfold in the past decade. The old idea that majors are bad and indies are good is far too unsophisticated for our complex times, not only because of mismanagement and outright dishonesty on the part of some "punk" labels, but also because it has become increasingly difficult to even tell who the majors are, and what they have their hand in. Part of the problem, as I see it, is that there are fewer voices out there calling for the integrity and independence of our scene, and more people content with the security of collector hobby-ism or weekend warrior punkness. I say fuck that, let's get talking about how to define our ethics, because ultimately our ethics and autonomy are what set us apart from mass-produced consumer culture and all of its destructive baggage.

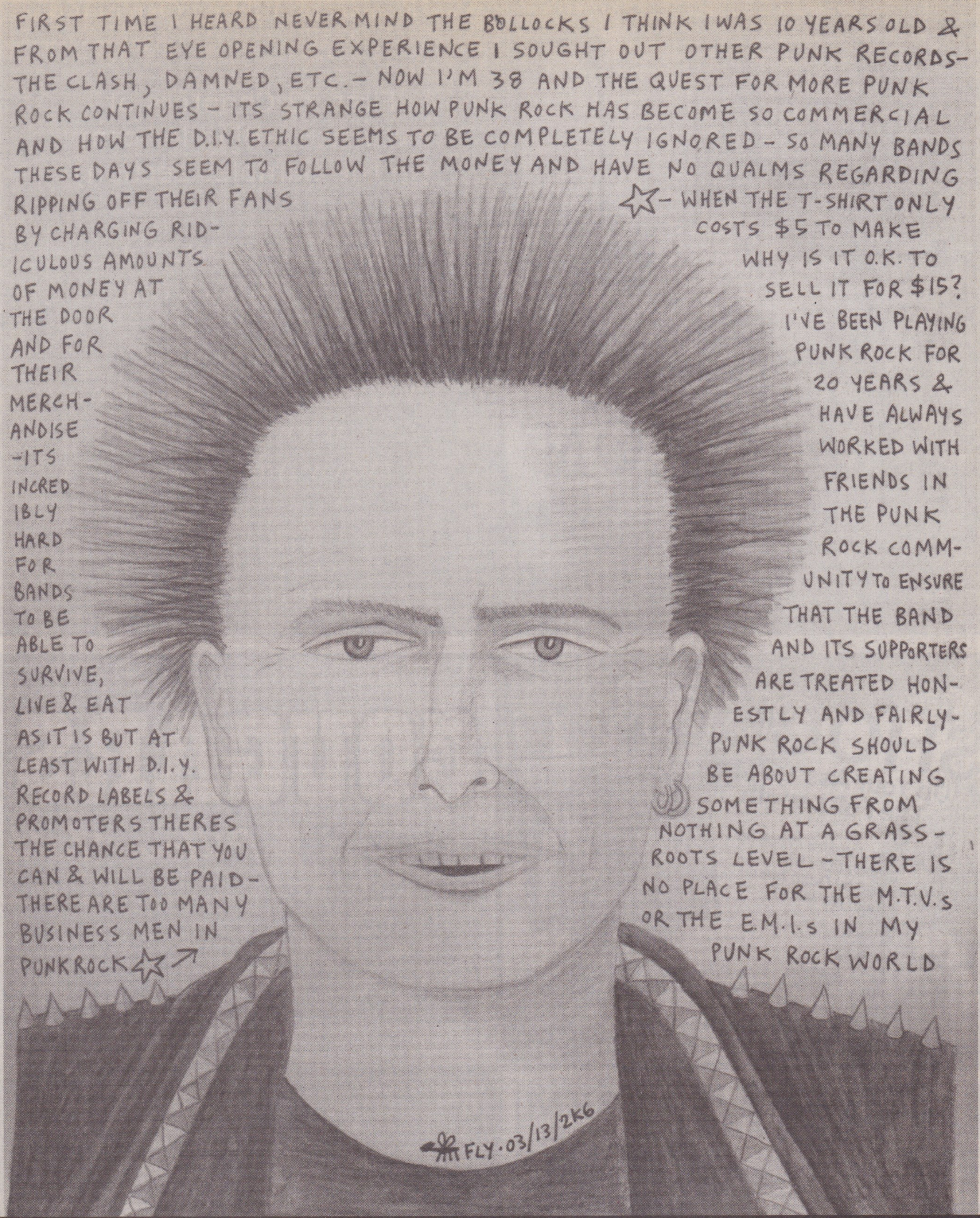
The centerpiece of this issue, which will spill over into the next issue as well, is a series of questions we posed to a number of punk "businesses"—labels, distros, screenprinters, book publishers, and zinesters; the responses we got were varied, and they are, we hope, the beginning of an honest discussion of punk business rather than the final word. In fact, there are a number of contradictory opinions within the responses, and scattered throughout the columns section as well. We are hoping that some of what you read gets you thinking, and possibly even putting pen to paper and writing in.

There will always be tension between business and punk rock. This is inevitable when we turn that which we want so badly not to commodify into products to be bought and sold. And what they say is true: punk rock is not going to save the world (though it can save your life), despite our best intentions or what we may have believed when we were fourteen years old. For some, this reality is reason enough to walk away from punk, but for me what we *can* accomplish makes our efforts here that much more vital. There isn't a way to create an unqualified utopia in the world we live in, so ravaged and tainted as it is by unimpeded corporate interest and corruption. Whether in large ways and small, we must contend with the world and the pressures that it places upon each of us. Punk has always been about creating real pockets of active counter culture that oppose the dominant ideology of the status quo. This means thinking about our choices, questioning our actions, and resisting assimilation.

Enjoy the issue, and see you next month.

—Golnar / PMB #241 / 530 Divisadero St. / San Francisco, CA 94117
golnar@maximumrocknroll.com

"What's important about punk rock is its independence of government and corporations and its network that exists outside of that. That is what is political—not the words, not the music as much as the independence." — Tim Yohannan

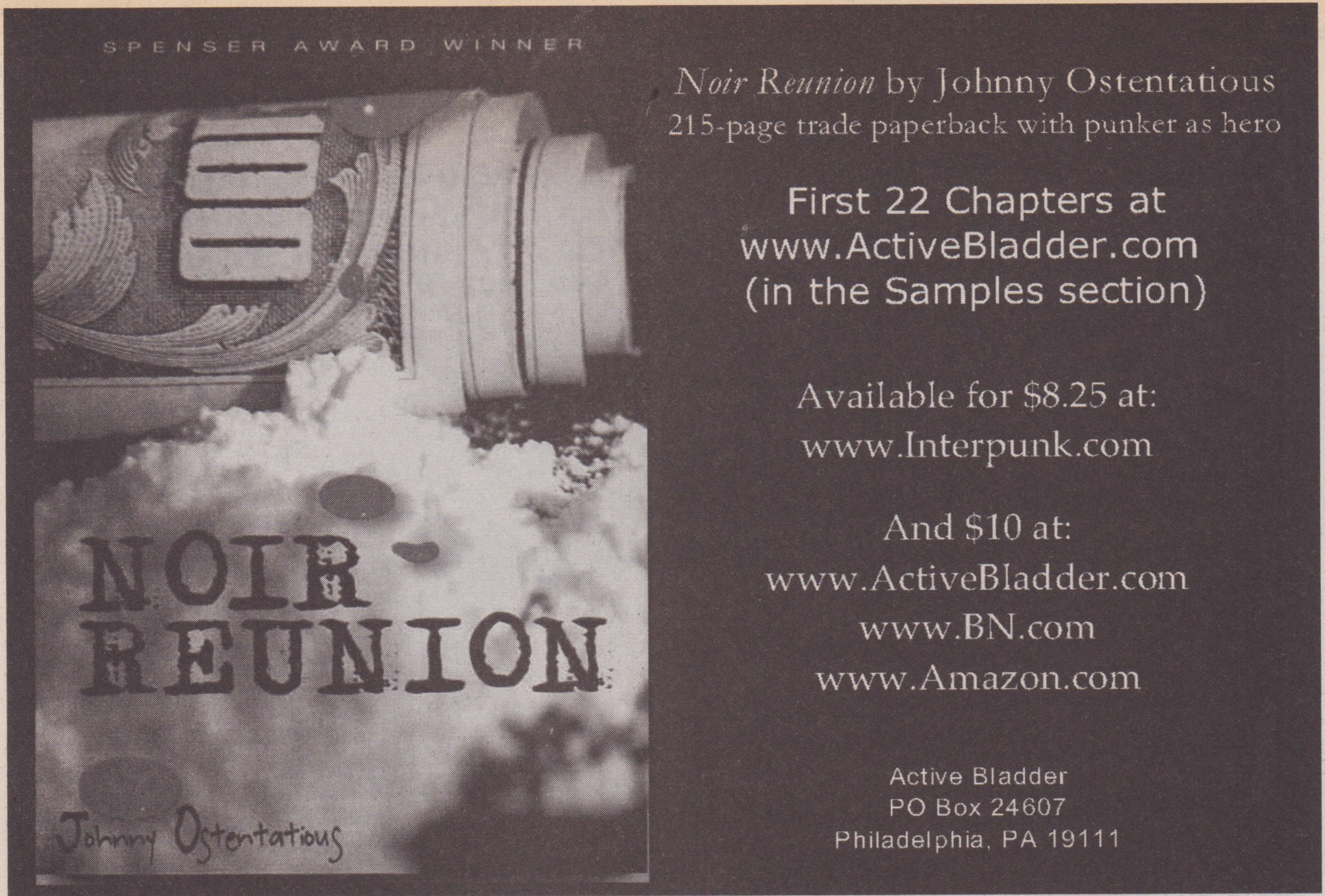


Simon Trolley – 03/13/2K6 – Lower East Side NYC

First off I have to say that this doesn't really look like Simon – maybe it could be his brother – I think I might have been a little hung over or something when I was drawing it – oops! – sorry Simon – anyway – I first met Simon in I think the early '90s in London when I was hanging out with Gary Dirt and there was a big show happening in the East End with Suicidal Supermarket Trolleys (Simon's band) and Dirt playing – it was such an amazing show! – there were maybe 300 – 400 punks there just going absolutely nuts and bouncing off the walls – truly a classic moment – Simon later moved to NYC and started singing with Distraught and later with Thought Crime – I think you can get hold of their stuff through Profane Existence – thanks Simon!

to contact Fly email fly@bway.net (put MRR in the subject so I know its not spam)

PEOPs #3 zine is now available for $5 (US) post paid – write to Fly PO Box 1318 Cooper Stn NYC NY 10276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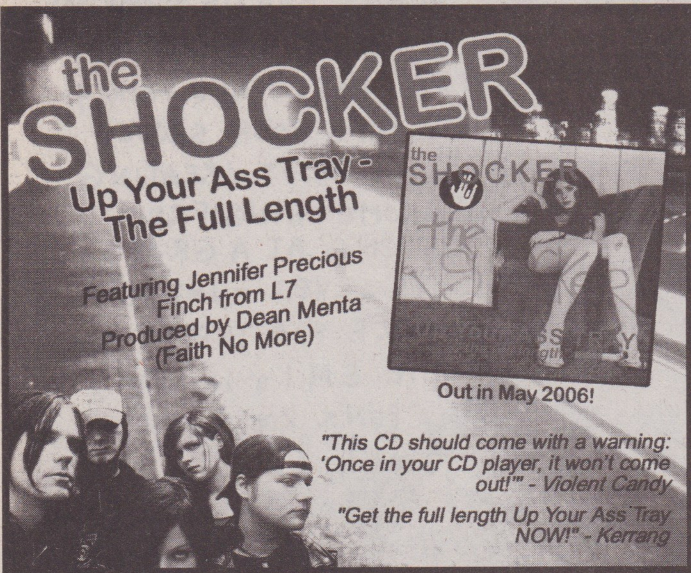
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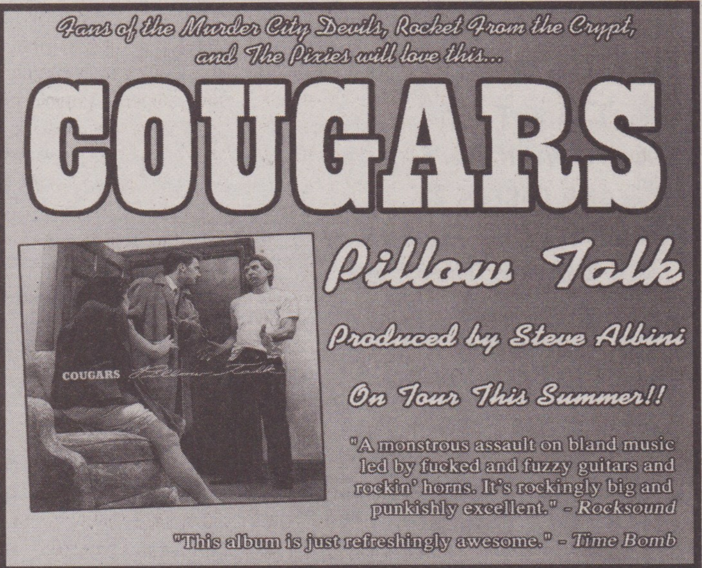
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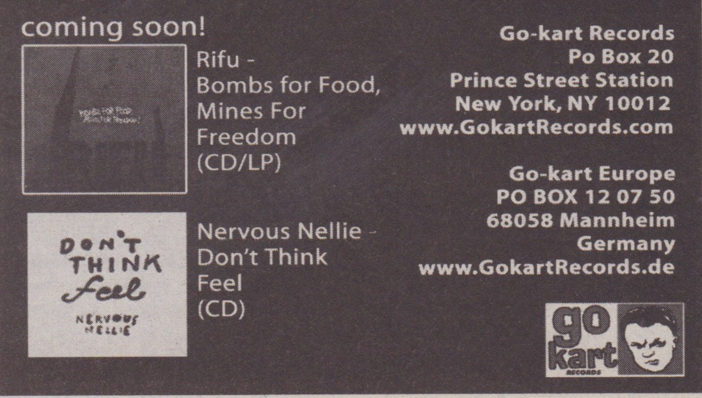
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MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #276 COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE & GOLNAR NIKPOUR

LAWLESSNESS AND VIOLENCE IN IRAQ

By Roula Khalaf
From an article in *Financial Times*

A year after the US invasion of Iraq, Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations envoy at the time, told Iraqis that civil wars were not started by a "decision." Countries slid into them, he said, when people were reckless and thought more of themselves than of the benefit to their own country.

Mr Brahimi's warnings are becoming Iraq's dreadful reality. On the third anniversary of the start of the war that ousted Saddam Hussein's regime, two images of Iraq emerge. One is the deteriorating sectarian violence on the ground. The other is the squabbling leaders still looking to form a government three months after parliamentary elections.

Whether Iraq is considered already in civil war or on the brink of it, what seems increasingly clear is that the political process on which the US had pinned hopes of stability has proved too weak and divisive to save the country from what will likely be years of violence and upheaval.

Though low-level sectarian attacks have been waged for a long time, the country's bleak prospects became more starkly apparent in the aftermath of the February 22 bombing of the Golden Mosque, the Shia shrine in the northern town of Samarra.

The first wave of Shia reprisals included the burning of Sunni mosques and killings by mobs. A week later, car bombs killed 50 people in Sadr city, the Shia stronghold of Baghdad controlled by militia loyal to Moqtada al-Sadr, the young radical cleric.

Within days, more than 100 bodies were found in Baghdad, some tortured to death, others hanging from telegraph posts. Iyad Allawi, the former prime minister, estimates that at least 50 people are killed in Iraq every day.

Alarmingly, the bloodshed of recent weeks exposed the waning power of Shia religious and political leaders to rein in the vigilantes. Even Mr Sadr's calls for restraint were ignored. Hadi al-Amery, the head of the Badr organisation, an arm of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, one of the main Shia parties, told Reuters news agency that small armed groups were being formed in villages and towns to protect the population.

"We're telling the people to ensure their own security if the government is incompetent," he said.

More militancy among the Shia majority plays into the hands of the Sunni insurgents and could help them draw broader support from the Sunni Arab community. Peter Harling, who has studied Iraq's insurgents for the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, says there are recent changes in the discourse of the groups (not only the al-Qaeda-type extremists whose strategy has always been to provoke civil war). The enemy, which used to be described as the occupying forces, is now increasingly seen as "the Shia sectarian government backed by Iran" waging war against the Sunnis.

As the violence intensifies, the two elements that could help contain the crisis—effective government and strong security forces—are still lacking.

US officials report encouraging progress in the readiness of the Iraqi army. But the Iraqi police, run by the interior ministry that has been controlled by a Shia party, has proved more of a problem than a solution. Accused of human rights abuses, including torture and death of detainees, policemen also allowed Shia militiamen through checkpoints to areas where reprisals were reported in the wake of the Samarra bombing.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the US ambassador to Iraq who has warned the country was "really vulnerable" to civil war, insists that a government should include a non-sectarian interior minister. US commanders also have been recruiting more Sunni Arabs to the police force.

But while the needs of a united, non-sectarian government have become greater, the political infighting has worsened, squandering the gains made in the December elections, when a high number of Sunni Arabs voted for the first time.

Ibrahim al-Jaafari, leader of the Daawa Islamist Shia party, has insisted on staying on as prime minister, after winning an internal battle within the Shia alliance that secured the largest number of seats in the elections. But the minority Kurds, the Sunni Arabs and secular parties are opposing his candidacy and argue that the government he led last year proved sectarian and unproductive. The battle for the top post has also exposed widening divisions within the Shia coalition, with the Daawa party, backed by Mr Sadr's movement, now pitted against Sciri.

Mr Khalilzad has been busy mediating between the various political factions in the hope of still producing an inclusive government. But his efforts could be undermined by the US, which has waged what it claims was a massive military operation around Samarra last week, drawing criticism from Sunni politicians involved in talks over the government.

With the risk of the Sunni-Shia conflict drawing in more directly the regional powers, Mr Khalilzad is set to start discussions with Iran, which has backed Shia parties including Sciri. The US, meanwhile, is also engaging Sunni Arab governments in talks over the future of Iraq.

Toby Dodge, a London-based Iraq expert, argues that the Iraq conflict may not lead to the break-up of the country or to a broader regional conflict.

"But Iraq's politicians are indulging in petty theatrics and short-term advantages while the country is ripping itself to pieces," he says. "What this leads to is something that could be worse than a civil war, it could be violent anarchy, with islands of comparative stability scattered across the country in a sea of violence."

VIDEO EVIDENCE OF ABUSE FORCES PENTAGON TO INVESTIGATE

By Aparisim Ghosh for *Time Magazine.*

The US military is conducting a criminal investigation into allegations that marines shot and killed fifteen civilians, including seven women and three children, in the Iraqi town of Haditha last November in an apparent act of revenge for the death of a US soldier by a roadside bomb. A videotape obtained by *Time Magazine* shows that many of the victims were still in their nightclothes when they died.

The US military is conducting a criminal investigation into allegations that marines shot and killed fifteen civilians, including seven women and three children, four months ago in Iraq. The killings occurred early on the morning of November 19th, after a roadside bomb struck a Humvee carrying US troops in the western Iraqi town of Haditha. The bomb killed one marine and injured two others.

The next day, the Marines said in a statement that fifteen Iraqi civilians died in the initial blast. They said that after the explosion, gunmen attacked the US convoy with small arms fire, prompting the Marines to return fire, killing eight insurgents. But relatives, survivors and doctors who saw the bodies say that is not true. They say the fifteen men, women and children were killed when marines burst into their houses after the blast and shot them dead in their nightclothes.

Human rights activists say that if the accusations prove to be true, the incident would rank as the worst case of deliberate killing of Iraqi civilians by US service members since the war began.

Soon after the incident, the mayor of Haditha led an angry delegation up to a nearby Marine camp to seek redress. Their protests were ignored and the US military stood by its original contention, that the civilians were killed by a roadside bomb. The story would have ended there had it not been taken up by Time magazine.

Time obtained a videotape shot in Haditha by an Iraqi journalism student one day after the incident. The tape shows that many of the victims, especially the women and children, were still in their nightclothes when they died. The scenes from inside the houses show that the walls and ceilings are pockmarked with shrapnel, bullet holes and blood.

In January, Time presented a copy of the video along with witness testimony to US military command in Baghdad. A preliminary military investigation was launched. It established that the men, women and children were indeed killed by the marines, though it described the deaths as "collateral damage." Now the case has been referred for criminal investigation by the Navy to establish whether the twelve marines involved were guilty of misconduct.

We are joined by one the reporters for Time magazine who broke the story. Aparisim Ghosh is the chief international correspondent for Time magazine. He has spent the last three and half years in Iraq. He joins us in our firehouse studio.

We called the Pentagon and invited them on the program. Pentagon spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Barry Venable declined to join us saying it would be "inappropriate" to comment while an investigation is underway.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER? ENDANGERED ANIMALS, EVIDENTLY...

From the Associated Press

Scientists are struggling to save the fast-disappearing bonobo, the gentle "hippie chimp" known for resolving squabbles through sex rather than violence. Unfortunately, bonobos are prized by Congolese for their tasty meat, and many villagers who are illegally hunting the wiry, wizen-faced apes don't realize how close their prey is to extinction.

"Bonobos are an icon for peace and love, the world's 'hippie chimps,"' said Sally Coxe of the Washington-based Bonobo Conservation Initiative. "To let them die off would be a catastrophe."

The animals are known for greeting rival groups with genital handshakes and sensual body rubs. Bonobo spats are swiftly settled—often with a French kiss and a quick round of sex.

Despite all the sex, however, female bonobos give birth to a single infant only once every five years, making the species especially vulnerable.

The bonobo, or pan paniscus, is native only to the vast rain forest in this huge central African nation, living high off the ground in treetop nests.

As few as 5,000 may now remain in Congo, down from an estimated 100,000 in 1984, said Ino Guabini, a primatologist with the World Wildlife Fund. "There is no question that bonobos are seriously threatened," Guabini said, speaking over a shrill forest symphony of birds, animals and insects. "We need urgent measures or there is no way we can protect the species."

But for poor villagers, bonobos can be lucrative business, with much of the meat heading for expensive, clandestine meals at restaurants in the cities. One bonobo can earn $200 for Richard Ipaka, a 50-year-old part-time poacher who lives in the provincial capital, Mbandaka. "That's enough money for two months," he said. Like many Congolese, he said he did not know bonobos are found in the wild only in his country. And like many others, he was skeptical that the ape is endangered.

"Our ancestors have been eating bonobos for centuries. How could they disappear?" Ipaka said. But the peace-loving bonobos are increasingly difficult to sight, and not just because they're good at hiding, suspended from the high branches of trees or swiftly traversing the lattice of thick, muddy roots strewn over the forest floor.

The best place to glimpse them these days may be the Bonobo Paradise sanctuary in Congo's capital, Kinshasa, which is home to a few dozen rescued from poachers by police. Poachers have devised an array of methods to bag bonobos. Hunters in Congo's Equator province say the apes are most easily captured when asleep drunk, so poachers intoxicate them with beer and palm wine. The dazed bonobos are stuffed in bags and carted off to local markets.

Other poachers use guns, and some leave poisoned meat in the forest, silently killing packs of up to 20 bonobos at a time. Ipaka, who uses a battle-worn Kalashnikov assault rifle to shoot bonobos sleeping in their nests, said he hunts most often with bands of unemployed militiamen left over from a string of rebellions, coups, and conflict that ravaged Congo beginning in the mid-1990s. The bonobo is the subject of age-old songs and legends, and conservationists hope to turn some of those traditions to their advantage.

In the village of Botwalu, for instance, locals believe the bonobo was once a man who lived with their tribe but now hides in the forest because an angry tree stripped him of its clothes. "The bonobo is a man, only it is ashamed to be naked. It is wrong to hunt or eat bonobos," said Mokelo Moibula, chief of a village committee that works to protect bonobos.

The Bonobo Conservation Initiative has begun working with villages that hold such hunting taboos to create a series of reserves for the graceful animals. "So far we're working on an area larger than the size of Wales, and it's getting bigger," Coxe said. That may not be enough. Even provincial police who are supposed to protect the bonobo are mostly ignorant about dangers to its survival, and they are often sympathetic to those who eat it. Some officers consume bonobo meat, too, said Clerivent Kanyamba, deputy chief of the Equator province police. "What can we do if bonobo meat is tasty?" Kanyamba said.

THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB IS BLOWIN' UP!

This story was in a million different places, but courttv.com had the best headine:

AUTHORITIES DISCOVER 'THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB' IS NAME OF PUNK BAND

ATHENS, Ohio (AP) — Authorities shut down four buildings at Ohio University after a police officer noticed a sticker that said "this bike is a pipe bomb" before finding out the message was the name of a punk rock band, a university spokesman said.

Police noticed the sticker on a bicycle early Thursday, then blocked streets around a university-owned restaurant where it was found, spokesman Jack Jeffery said. A bomb squad came from Columbus, about 65 miles away.

The bomb squad pried apart the bike with a hydraulic device normally used to rescue accident victims trapped in cars, acting Athens Fire Chief Ken Gilbraith said. Once they had it open, they saw there was no bomb.

The buildings were reopened after about two hours.

AND THEN LATER...

from The Athens News

Ohio University changed its mind Monday about pursuing criminal charges against a graduate student, whose bicycle triggered a visit from a bomb squad last Thursday morning.

Patrick K. Hanlin, 28, was charged last week with a first-degree misdemeanor charge of inducing panic based on the incident.

OU announced Monday, however, that after investigating, it had determined that Hanlin "meant no harm" when he put a bumper sticker on his bike with the name of an obscure Florida punk band, "this bike is a pipe bomb."

Based on the lack of malicious intent, the university decided to drop the inducing panic charge.

Around 5:30 a.m. Thursday, a patrolling OU Police officer saw the sticker on Hanlin's bike, which was chained to a railing at the Oasis, a campus restaurant.

Not realizing the phrase "this bike is a pipe bomb" referred to a band, the officer reported it as a possible bomb threat, which led to the Columbus Fire Department sending its bomb squad to campus.

Bomb-squad technicians dismantled the bicycle, while OU officials cordoned off a section of campus for about three hours, shutting down four buildings.

Hanlin came forward to identify himself as the bike's owner and to explain the significance of the sticker.

The student could not be reached by phone for comment, but did tell The Athens NEWS via e-mail that "I don't have a lot to say except to thank all of the folks who supported me."

PIPE BOMB PIPES IN...

from Dateline Alabama.com

Terry: "I think it's stupid. We've done these interviews for six days. It's so obvious that if you were going to blow up something you wouldn't put a sticker on your bomb saying, "This is a bomb." It makes me sad that they cut up this kid's bike. No one's taking responsibility for paying for his bike.

Ted: Yeah, they thought it was a bomb and then cut it up with machines? If anyone should be [indicted] it should be the cop for destroying property, not the kid.

EDITORIAL: ON THE DEATH OF MILOSEVIC

for MRR News by Tom Yohannan

In all likelihood the opinion shapers in the West will use the death of Milosevic to continue their relentless demonization of the Serbs and concomitant whitewashing of the Croats, the Bosnian Muslims, and the Kosovo Albanians, as well as of their patrons: first the Germans, then the EEC/EU, and finally the US.

No mention will ever be made of Izetbegovic's ties with international Islamist terrorism, of Tudjman's Holocaust denials and defense of the Ustashe, of the disenfranchisement of Croatia's Serbs by the incipient German-protégé state before their eventual expulsion, of the roles of Helmut Kohl and Hans Dietrich-Genscher in pushing for unilateral recognition of Greater Croatia with perfectly predictable consequences, of the presence of many hundreds of putative Qaida mujahadin in both Bosnia and Kosovo, of the elimination of the tens of thousands of Serbs from the area around Srebenica by the very same militants who are said to have died in that town at the hands of Serb forces, of the eyewitness accounts that put the blame for the Sarajevo market shelling on the Bosniak army and not on their adversaries, of the single greatest act of ethnic cleansing in the wars of the Yugoslav succession, Operation Storm, in which the Americans under Clinton aided the Croats in creating a Serb-free Krajina, of the pogroms in Kosovo in the spring of 2005 under NATO's watchless eye and the resulting destruction of dozens of Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries and their priceless iconography, or of myriad other instances of the one-sidedness and partiality of the treatment of the Yugoslav wars and those who fought them by the very forces who intervened and aggravated them to such a great extent.

Milosevic was no angel, but neither was Izetbegovic or Tudjman, who were both allowed to carry their exclusivist programs out without let or hindrance, and then permitted to peacefully meet their Islamist and Crusader makers, respectively. And neither are del Ponte, Solana, Clinton, Albright, Holbrooke, and all the others who continue to enjoy the approval of liberal opinion, despite having behaved no better in the pursuit of imperial prerogative than the Bush clique that succeeded them. And special mention must be made of Tony Blair, who has played on both teams with equal finesse. I suggest that anyone with even a minimal interest in fairness look beyond the obvious and easy sources of information. Instead of CNN, look into what Chomsky or Michael Parenti might have said. Or for that matter Harold Pinter, whose eloquent words on the Iraq War were welcomed by so many on the occasion of his award of the Nobel Peace Prize. Take a moment to note what he said about the Milosevic trial:

"The US/NATO court trying Slobodan Milosevic was always totally illegitimate. It could never be taken seriously as a court of justice. Milosevic's defense is powerful, convincing, persuasive and impossible to dismiss."

But Serbia offers its own best defense. Of all the Yugoslav successor states, it is the one which represents the greatest diversity of language, culture, and religion. EU candidate Croatia has been wiped clean of all but Catholic Croatians, finishing the task begun by Ante Pavelic under German supervision in the 1940s. Bosnia, which was a multicultural republic in the Yugoslav federation until the EU recognized an Islamist government's declaration of independence, has been torn asunder, although stooges of empire like Paddy Ashdown are doing their best to patch over the differences and re-establish unity by decree—a sure-fire way to bring about abject failure. Kosovo is about to be given independence as an Albanian national state in which Serbs have no rights to life or property, under a government headed by an accused war criminal.

The Hague lacks the infrastructure needed to house all the guilty parties were they to be brought to book. But the West lacks the resolve and the decency to do so. It is easier to blame the Serbs and put them on trial, while enthroning the murderers of Serbs in the various client states that have been carved out of the former Yugoslavia.

WHAT'S WORSE, CHRISTIANS OR ELECTRONIC TRACKING?

From Wired News

Katherine Albrecht is on a mission from God. The influential consumer advocate has written a new book warning her fellow Christians that radio frequency identification may evolve to become the "mark of the beast"—meaning the technology is a sign that the end-times are drawing near.

"My goal as a Christian (is) to sound the alarm," said Albrecht, in a conversation over tea at a high-end grocery store. Albrecht has been a leading opponent of RFID, which is fast becoming a part of passports and payment cards, and is widely expected to replace barcode labels on consumer goods. RFID chips contain unique identification codes, and can be read at varying distances with special reader devices.

Albrecht hopes her new book, *The Spychips Threat: Why Christians Should Resist RFID and Electronic Surveillance*, will be embraced by the millions of Americans (59 percent of them, according to a 2002 Time/CNN poll) who share her belief that the Book of Revelation in the Bible forecasts events that are yet to come.

The Spychips Threat is in fact a Christianized version of its secular predecessor, *Spychips: How Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Move With RFID*, which came out last fall.

Both books are published by the Christian publishing powerhouse Thomas Nelson. Both lay out the same totalitarian scenarios, based on documented plans by Philips, Procter and Gamble, Wal-Mart and other companies, along with the federal government, to track consumer goods and people individually.

Absent from the Christian version is the original foreword by the science fiction author and blogger Bruce Sterling. In its place, Albrecht and co-author Liz McIntyre have written an introduction that says that RFID chips, particularly the VeriChip subcutaneous implant designed for humans, bear an uncanny resemblance to "the mark" described in the Bible's Book of Revelation.

If the VeriChip becomes a common payment device similar to the "contactless" payment system in the Exxon Mobil Speedpass, all who wish to buy and sell goods will be compelled "to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads," as it says in Revelation, the Spychips Threat authors contend.

Another passage in Revelation describes a vision in which "a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image." Albrecht and McIntyre write, ""Interestingly, an implanted RFID device like the VeriChip could potentially cause such a tormenting sore if it is subjected to a strong source of electromagnetic radiation," such as a directed energy weapon.

But fear not, says Boston University professor Richard Landes, who specializes in the history of apocalyptic thought. New technologies often trigger alarm among millenarians—those who believe Christ is returning to Earth to set up a theocratic kingdom, but only after nonbelievers die most unpleasantly in a battle with the anti-Christ.

Y2K, bar codes and Social Security numbers all triggered end-times warnings, said Landes, who was co-founder and director of the Center for Millennial Studies at BU, which studied contemporary cult activities and end-times literature prior to 2000.

"Even the introduction of the Gutenberg press caused waves of apocalyptic thinking," said Landes. Albrecht does not believe those who said bar code labels and Social Security numbers were "the mark of the beast" were completely wrong. Rather, those technologies were precursors to RFID, and steps toward totalitarianism, she said. "All of these technologies are of concern," said Albrecht. "I'd like to think I'd be speaking out against them, too, if I was around at the time they were introduced."

Albrecht's entry into the Christian book marketplace has not marginalized her voice in the media or with the RFID industry. Last week, Albrecht and her Spychips co-author, Liz McIntyre, made appearances on ABC-TV, The Osgood Files on the CBS Radio Network, and on the late night radio program, Coast to Coast AM. McIntyre was also quoted in a Financial Times article last month.

Albrecht sees little joy in what she predicts for RFID, "I hope I am wrong," she said, before leaving for an interview with ABC. "I'll take no pleasure in being proven right in a few years."

TRIAL OF UK BOMB PLOT SUSPECTS BEGINS

From aljazeera.net

The trial of seven British men alleged to be part of a Muslim extremist group that plotted to set off explosives in Britain began on Tuesday in London. David Waters, the prosecutor, told a jury at London's Old Bailey criminal court that the men allegedly planned to carry out attacks on nightclubs, trains, and the electricity network between January 2003 and March 2004.

Police raided houses in London and its suburbs, arresting the seven men and seizing 600 kg of fertilizers, which could be used to make bombs, the prosecutor said.

"The interception came only when most of the necessary components were in place and all that remained before their plans achieved their ultimate goal was for the target or targets to be finally agreed," Waters told the jury.

He alleged they plotted to make "a bomb or bombs which would be deployed at the very least to destroy a strategic plant within the United Kingdom, or more realistically to kill and injure citizens of the UK."

Waters said the explosion or explosions were to take place in the UK but much of the preparation was to take place in Pakistan and in Canada through the group's accomplices there. He said the courts would also hear evidence from the US from the Pakistani-born US citizen Mohammed Babar, who pleaded guilty in New York to various terrorist-related offences.

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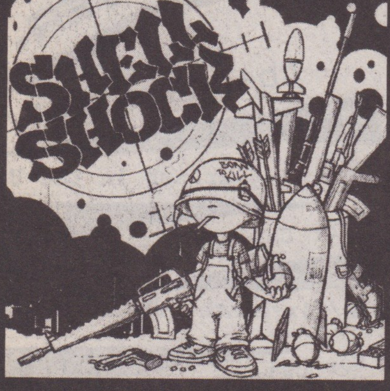

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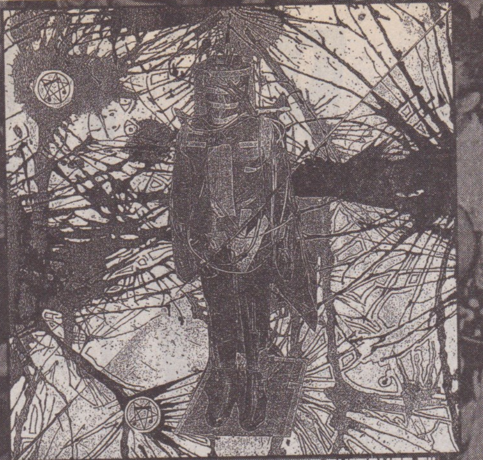
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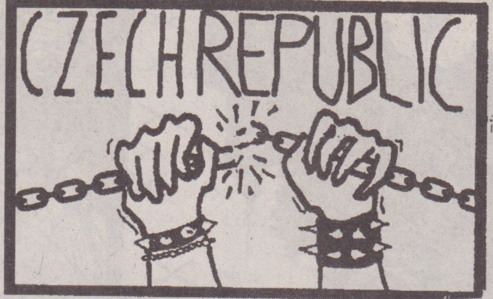


Scene report from Czech Republic – February 2006

So less than one year after my previous scene report from Czech (printed in *MRR* #267) I am here again with some updated information of my beloved country. Like always I write only about stuff which I personally find interesting. This is by no means complete coverage of the Czech scene, so feel free to direct any insults/complaints towards me, you can find the address at the end of this article.

I honestly believe that right now the Czech scene is stronger than ever, maybe not as enthusiastic as it was in the early-mid '90s, but surely today's bands are simply much better, there are tons of great gig places, labels, etc. The only thing I miss are zines; there's definitely less of them, which is also a global trend, because of complete the internet domination. Anyway, here we go...

Cumstains across your record collection...

There are two main reasons why there so many Czech bands have released records lately. We have one of the last pressing plants of Europe located here, near Prague, and there are many small labels, who cooperate with each other. It's quite usual to have five, ten, or more labels sharing money to release one 7". I find it totally great because it keeps the scene on a very low-key, human level and of course it is DIY to the bone.

I will now talk more about some records (not exclusively since there are a few interesting CDs and tapes as well), which were released within the last year and I advise you to check out. In the end you probably will not see most of these bands live if you live outside Czech, so with the exception of your Czech holidays, records are the only way how to find out about them. I know that some of this stuff was discussed a little in my previous report and also that some of it received reviews in this magazine, but I am sure that it will be interesting to at least some of you.

BASTO

DREAD 101/V.I.R. split EP (Insane Society Records)—Two years in the making, finally out at the end of 2005 now that both bands are pretty much dead. Not 100% about V.I.R. but there was no sign of life from them after their spring 2004 UK tour. This is a masterpiece of Czech crust, which I fear will probably be forgotten or passed by most since DREAD 101 split up already back in 2003. You can find two songs by each band here. DREAD 101 unleash their ripping Scandi-crust, STATE OF FEAR inluenced fury, and V.I.R. goes for a little more experimental approach combining their dark heavy crust with some slower almost industrial parts. Great lyrics from both, especially the V.I.R.'s militant and nihilistic visions. Like always with Insane Society the cover art just kicks ass.

GRIDE/LAHAR split EP (14 labels, try Samuel Records)—Many people reported this as the best Czech record of 2005. It also was released at the end of the year. Finally some new GRIDE stuff after a few years of silence, though this time these are only cover songs! The same goes for LAHAR. Both bands cover '80s, '90s, and current hardcore bands from their area. GRIDE plays their unique brand of extreme HC, even faster than before—the drums are inhuman! LAHAR plays their HELLNATION/YACOPSAE wall of fastcore well. Some of the covered bands are TELEX ('80s hardcore legends), SERIOUS MUSIC ('90s grindcore legends). The cover art is really beatiful with a huge drawing of both bands facing each other live (drawn by LAHAR's bassplayer who is a great tattoo artist), and includes an extensive local-HC scene history written both in Czech and English. By the way GRIDE's website is finally ready (www.gride.wz.cz) and are now recording for a split EP with LYCANTHROPHY, which should be out soon on Insane Society.

LAHAR/IDIOT SAVANT split 10" (many labels, limited to 300 copies so I think it's now sold out but you can try Samuel too)—For a pretty long time we have waited for some vinyl by LAHAR! The rumours about an EP on 625 Productions still have not materialized, but there are now two records out! LAHAR's side of the split 10" is blazing, extreme HC, super-clean and tight. IDIOT SAVANT from Germany is pretty good and plays three songs of dark, depressive HC with dual male and female vocals. Nice cover art as well, again from Robert/LAHAR.

GUIDED CRADLE LP (Damage Done Records for vinyl, Insane Society Records for CD and Gasmask Records for tape verison)—This international band based in Prague just went straight for the throat with this debut LP released only one year after their very first show. A bold step that not many bands can pull off, but it seems they were successful as the record became an instant hit, not only in Czech. The first pressing is sold out, and a second will be out very soon. Heavy arse-ripping crust with a huge, old UK and newer Portland crust sound, with some WOLFBRIGADE as well. Very powerfull sound! Nice cover art with trolls —maybe mutants—attacking a cop-car. Their first European tour is in April and May. Check out their website www.guidedcradle.com for dates. Another record, this time a split EP with Germany's INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL, is in the works.

MALIGNANT TUMOUR *Burn In Hell* LP (CD and tape also available, all formats released by Insane Society, limited version of 66 copies in fake leather)—I already raved about newer M.T. stuff last time, but now I have the full LP in my hands so I will write more. It is really good shit if you are into '80s German thrash metal with some Scandinavian crust parts *a la* UNCURBED or DISFEAR, and a little of MOTÖRHEAD as well. Definitely a fun band to watch and great for parties. But, I am personally pretty disappointed, and it is a little embarassing for the fans of their previous mince-core and political bands, with their decision to make a video for the Czech version of MTV. They are definitely more of a metal band now, both in music and attitude and I think that it suits them best. Good luck to them. M.T. played one gig in Ukraina last year and this year a second UK tour and split EP with Britain's G.I.S.M. imitators, GURKHA, are in the works. Check out www.insanesociety.net/malignant.

HOMO CONSUMENS/YARVAR COOCHA split EP (Malarie Records)—Third split EP from HOMO CONSUMENS and probably their best. Really noisy, sounding like a train-wreck, and in the vein of WRETCHED, IMPACT, and other ancient Italian bands. I don't like YARVAR COOCHA so much. They share their bassplayer with HOMO CONSUMENS, but their brand of rocking HC/punk with male and female vocals is too controlled and not anything special to write home about. The cover art sucks, but I strongly encourage you to get this if only for the HOMO CONSUMENS side. Since their second UK tour with SEE YOU IN HELL in September 2005 the band has been inactive, and their bass-player is leaving, so this could be their swan-song.

FESTA DESPERATO *Novy Babylon* EP& *Zivot Ve Hrichu* tape (releaed by many labels, try Gasmask or you can write to me)—I know that it's not safe to talk about a record which is not yet released, but since this is at the pressing plant right now, and I put some money into this release through my early '90s label, and I now have the advance CD-R, I will write about it. This is probably my fave Czech band right now, not because we share the same rehearsal room, but because their raw distorted punk just kills! Think energy and raw sound of bands like FRAMTID or DISCLOSE and some minor elements of the heavy and dark harmonies of some popular Portland bands, and you have FESTA DESPERATO. The tape is the debut recording of their new lineup. By the way check out their website: www.festadesperato.com.

MASSGENOCIDE PROCESS/VISIONS OF WAR split LP (and now CD and tape, both with bonus songs, Impregnate Noise Laboratories)—I know this is not the newest one, but the CD was released recently and in cooperation with some French labels, Fight For Your Mind and Maloka, I think. M.G.P. assaults you with their heavy, downtuned crusty metal attack and brutal vocals. Their music is completely influenced by Scandinavian crust, so it's nothing too original but I still like them a lot. Their Belgian partners on the other side disappointed me a little after the killer split LP with OLHO DE GATO. This stuff is not as intense. It's more crust-punk oriented this time with a less strong sound. But it's nothing to be ashamed of and their DISCHARGE cover at the end rips! Foldout cover-poster and patches demonstrate lots of work went into this release! By the way there is a new line-up, new singer and now a second guitarist for M.G.P., and a website: www.masscrust.wz.cz.

SPES EREPTA EP (cooperation between many labels, try Phobia Records)—Same thing as FESTA DESPERATO, the record is at the pressing plant and I was again blessed with a free promo copy! This is Prague's, and for that matter Czech's, only vegan-straight edge-crust band. I was not convinced by their live show, but was blown away by this great studio recording! Very intense and heavy, anthemic crust along the lines of WORLD BURNS TO DEATH and SEVERED HEAD

OF STATE. I can't comment much on this release since I have not seen the cover art, but the singer assured me it will be very luxurious with silver print and some other shit. Definitely recommended!

NOT/UNLEASH split CD (Rage Dis Records)—Finally some new stuff from NOT, who have been playing for almost 10 years. The new stuff is much less INFEST sounding and more similar to spastic, *emo-violence ala* ORCHID and grindcore. UNLEASH from Japan play the typical Japanese raw thrashcore full of energy—definitely a great surprise!

INNOXIA CORPORA *K Certu* LP (released by many labels and the band itself, try Impregnate or Malarie)—This band became an instant classic after their first LP, and this, their second, is probably even better. Definitely not as fast and intense like their debut, but with more hooks and great melodies. Both guitar-players are great musicians and come up with some very catchy songs. It's kind of retro punk with lots of power and energy, the kind of stuff many people reading this mag go mad for. It's right in the same league with bands like FUCKED UP, OBSERVERS, or REGULATIONS, which doesn't mean that they sound the same, just the vibe is similar. You can hear some '80s Czech and Polish punk influences as well. While I compared most of the above-mentioned Czech bands to some of their more popular foreign counterparts, INNOXIA is a pretty unique band with their classic take on the Eastern European sound. If you're looking for something original, try this. Website: www.innoxia-corpora.wz.cz.

MAC GYVER EP (many labels, try Malarie)—Similar to INNOXIA CORPORA, but not as good. Again, some rocking punk but this has more dark and moody melodies. They're a very over-looked band and sadly not all that active. But I have heard something about a MAC GYVER/PAZI SNAJPER split EP planned—MAC GYVER formed from the ashes of P.Z. I recommend searching for this platter as it will quickly disappear, and it's some pretty cool and original stuff.

GREX/POSLEDNI PRANI MRTVEHO HUMANISTY split tape (Impregnate Noise Laboratories)—Fuck, there is nothing more odd and un-hip than raw grind/noise bands in 2005. And, I seriously doubt this magazine is widely read by fans of early '90s German noisecore acts like W.B.I., STERBEHILFE, BARCASS, or 7 M.O.N. Anyway, GREX plays some raw grind-crust chaos with two singers and very political lyrics, but P.P.M.H., translation "Last Wish Of Dead Humanist," just blow them away with no less than 39 explosions of intense noisecore. But fear not, both bands recorded in a real studio so the sound-quality is great. In the end both remind me some noisy South American bands. GREX sounds a bit like ROT, P.P.M.H., and early RUIDO DE ODIO. The P.P.M.H. side has funny intros but most of the lyrics are serious with a heavy emphasis on anarchist theories. They are translated to English, Polish, German and French, and the whole cover is a seven-inch size booklet printed on recycled paper. The tapes are factory printed so it's a very high quality product! P.P.M.H. have recently recorded for a future split EP, and during the session the singer's chest-muscle had problems and an ambulance had to be called! As you can see, their music is very intense and life-threatenning!

DEMARCHE *Promo 2005* CD-r—I am not sure if it is widely available, but if you write them I am sure they will be happy to burn a copy for you. Five songs of driving, crusty punk with a raw sound that suits them well. They toured the UK last summer but have no official releases released and are virtually unknown ouside of Prague. I was pleasantly surprised by their recording, so make sure to check out www.demarche.tk

Some records that are in the works and should be out very soon or are already out, but I haven't heard them yet include: ZEMEZLUC *Live Puntalla Rock 2005* 10", powerful punk rock from my hometown, released on colour vinyl by Ultima Ratio; NEEDFUL THINGS *Dead Point* COD, their debut album of blazing grindcore…I can't wait for the vinyl version which should be out on Impregnate, www.needfulthings.wz.cz; PRUMYSLOVA SMRT/KOBRA XI split EP, furious, extreme HC with machine-gun drumming versus raw, chaotic HC-metal…still in the works, I am with others releasing it in May just in time for PRUMYSLOVA SMRT's European tour, www.prumyslovasmrt.wz.cz for dates; V/A: *Bones Of Prague* CD, Emergency Records compilation of raw punk and crust bands from the capital city featuring GUIDED CRADLE, DEMARCHE, A-BRIGADE and a

DEGENERACE

FESTA DESPERATO

INNOXIA CORPORA

DEMARCHE

SEE YOU IN HELL

couple more; STOLEN LIVES/TIME OF MY LIFE split EP, also in the works…my band just played with STOLEN LIVES two weeks ago and we were blown away by their HIGHSCORE/DS 13 full-on energy style, including their cover of INFEST's "Which Side?" They are a very young and promising band, I will probably put some money into this release as well, so write me for more information. I haven't heard TIME OF MY LIFE from Slovakia yet, but they probably have a similar sound; HIBAKUSHA *Morula* CD, their (maybe) second full length of powerful, grinding crustcore, www.hibakusha.webz.cz.

Also LYCANTHROPY, THEMA 11 and SEE YOU IN HELL will more than likely have new LPs out in 2006, so watch out for those. Also, the long-awaited Czech bands *Tribute To INFEST* EP on Impregnate with GRIDE, LAHAR, STOLEN LIVES, MASSGENOCIDE PROCESS, and more should be out this year on Impregnate Noise Laboratories.

Speaking of compilations, some of us here in Brno feel that right now is the best time to document a our local scene with an LP compilation of the following bands: BASTO, FESTA DESPERATO, SCARTO, RISPOSTA, SEE YOU IN HELL and maybe some more. Also, the now defunct MRTVA BUDOUCNOST, a band I used to play in may be on this, utilizing recordings that were supposed to be released ten years ago by the Japanese DIY Records label! I will keep you posted about this huge project. There's a chance it will include a detailed history of the local scene, tons of photos, and a huge poster and flyer gallery since 1987.

Dead bands, new bands and more

FRIENDSHIP FOREVER, who had two songs on the *Dying Alive/Living Dead* compilation LP, and NON-COMMITAL, the band with the ex-DREAD 101 singer, broke up. No recordings from the latter that I know of. DEGENERACE, noisy KUOLEMA, SEKUNDA worship, has a new website at www.degenerace.wz.cz. RISPOSTA is a new, young, crust as fuck band from Brno, and are very influenced by DOOM evident by their cover of "Relief." They can be contacted through the FESTA DESPERATO address. BASTO, riotous, raw punk, with an '80s Finnish sound, is from Brno and is now in the studio recording an EP and for the compilation mentioned above. They were supposed to break up and played their *farewell* gig at our annual "Killed By Brno Fest," but have continued to play, so I am not sure about their current status. I am looking for their studio recordings because they use the same studio and sound-engineer as GUIDED CRADLE and their live show is amazing! Contact them through the Ultima Ratio address. The same goes for SCARTO, who will record very soon. They opened the "Killed By Brno Fest" and surprised everybody with their tight and furious thrash-grind. With some slow and heavy parts, they are quite the original band! Contact again can be made through the Ultima Ratio address. THEMA 11 tried to tour the UK in November, but their van died right in front of Barvak's, runs Insane Society records, house! But their side-project, KARL MARX, managed to tour Ukraine! I can't wait for the tour report, which they promised to write for my zine! LVMEN, who was really active at the end of the '90s, two LPs on Day After Records and toured a lot around Europe, began playing again. Dark, slow, depressive hardcore, for fans of NEUROSIS, and have a webpage at www.lvmen.cz. SAMOCHOTIJO is a new band playing dark and metalic crust akin to REMAINS OF THE DAY but without the violin. Check out http://samochotijo.wz.cz. MORE BAD NEWS and SHEEVA YOGA will tour Germany during the first-two weeks of May. For more info, or if you can help, check out http://morebadnews.czechcore.cz

"My Life! My Life!" (LACK OF INTEREST)

Our United Crusties gig collective did a couple of shows during the summer of 2005. There were FUCKED UP and BORN/DEAD gigs in the beginning of September, both with surprisingly low turnouts—50-60 people—but had around 100 in November for CATHETER! It seems that people are quite hungry for old school grindcore here. Also SOTATILA from Wien played with them and managed to turn the club into total chaos with their authentic Finnish raw punk. For December our hopes were high for the third annual "Killed By Brno Fest," this time with nine bands, all from Czech as usual. It was quite a wild night with a few of the different band's singers wounded and part of the drums destroyed during the BASTO's set, but all in a very friendly manner! I was personally blown away by BASTO's and SCARTO's sets most, and GRIDE, DEZINFEKCE and IDIOT CRUSOE, local undergound legends from the early '90s, were excellent. SPES EREPTA, DEGENERACE and RABIES also played, so it was a very loud event! SEE YOU IN HELL attacked the stage dressed as samurais, with the label boss Barvak dressed as a sumo wrestler, and jumped straight into GAUZE's "Distort Japan"! If you plan to visit Czech anytime this year, make it for December 2006 and come to Brno to our next fest!

For info about Czech gigs check out www.czechcore.cz; United Crusties has all the information on our band's website. This year we will

do gigs for two Berlin Deutsch punk as fuck bands, STROHSAECKE and T.T.C., as well as BURY THE LIVING from Tennesee, and SICK TERROR from Brazil, and probably some more.

SEE YOU IN HELL has released the *Umet se Prodat* ("Market Your Self") LP and CD re-released in Indonesia on Ibuku Diperkoza, in Croatia on Twisted Justice, and in Mexico on Cryptas. The Brazilian version, featuring a bonus video, will be out in March on Usina De Sangue. In April and May we are leaving for Japan and will be the first Czech band to ever tour there, and probably only the second one from the former Eastern Bloc after Poland's DEZERTER. The dates and places are the following: 4/28 Tokyo @ Koiwa—Em 7, 4/29 Miyagi—Sendai Flyes House, 4/30 Tokyo @ Kichioji—Warp, 5/1 Mie @ Ise—Question, 5/2 Osaka—Namba Bears, 5/3 Kochi—Kochi Feet, 5/4 Okayama @ Kurashiki, 5/5 Nagoya @ Imaike—Huck Finn, 5/6 Tokyo @ Hachioji—Rinky Dink Studio, 5/7 Tokyo—Koenji 20000V. The tour was organized by Shingo of Too Circle Records and I am not writing the other bands names as some of you would be probably a little bit jelaous with me. Check out the website if you care.

Right now I am working on issue 26 of my now annual zine, *Hluboka Orba*, and it should be out in July. Again, it will be a full page format book, soft-cover, more than 150 pages, and a print-run of 800-1,000 copies. It will be written in Czech only with lots of DIY hardcore-punk related stuff from all over the world. You can send your stuff for review if you want, but make sure to do it before April 15th so it will reach me in time.

Hluboka Orba Records has released the MRTVA BUDOUCNOST *Best Shots 97-99* tape, the second part of our discography, FESTA DESPERATO *Novy Babylon* EP, LAMANT (furious thrash punk from Belarus, which includes their two demos and an older project band of their singer called SELFSHIT) tape, and soon the PRUMYSLOVA SMRT/KOBRA XI split EP. If you're intersted in any of this, or SEE YOU IN HELL stuff, write me for trades. Usually if it's raw punk, crust, or extreme HC, I am interested. I am not too picky about trades like other labels who became too successful or too big.

Greeting to all friends I met during my Bay Area holidays this January. The MRR house people and Super Sabado Fest ruled! I had a really, really great time!

Thanks a lot for reading through this. If you need more information or contacts, don't hesitate to get in touch. Warning! I don't book gigs for emo, tough guy metal, Fat Wreck type of punk rock. Try somebody else. Also, I don't review it in my zine, so let's save both my and your time. Bye!

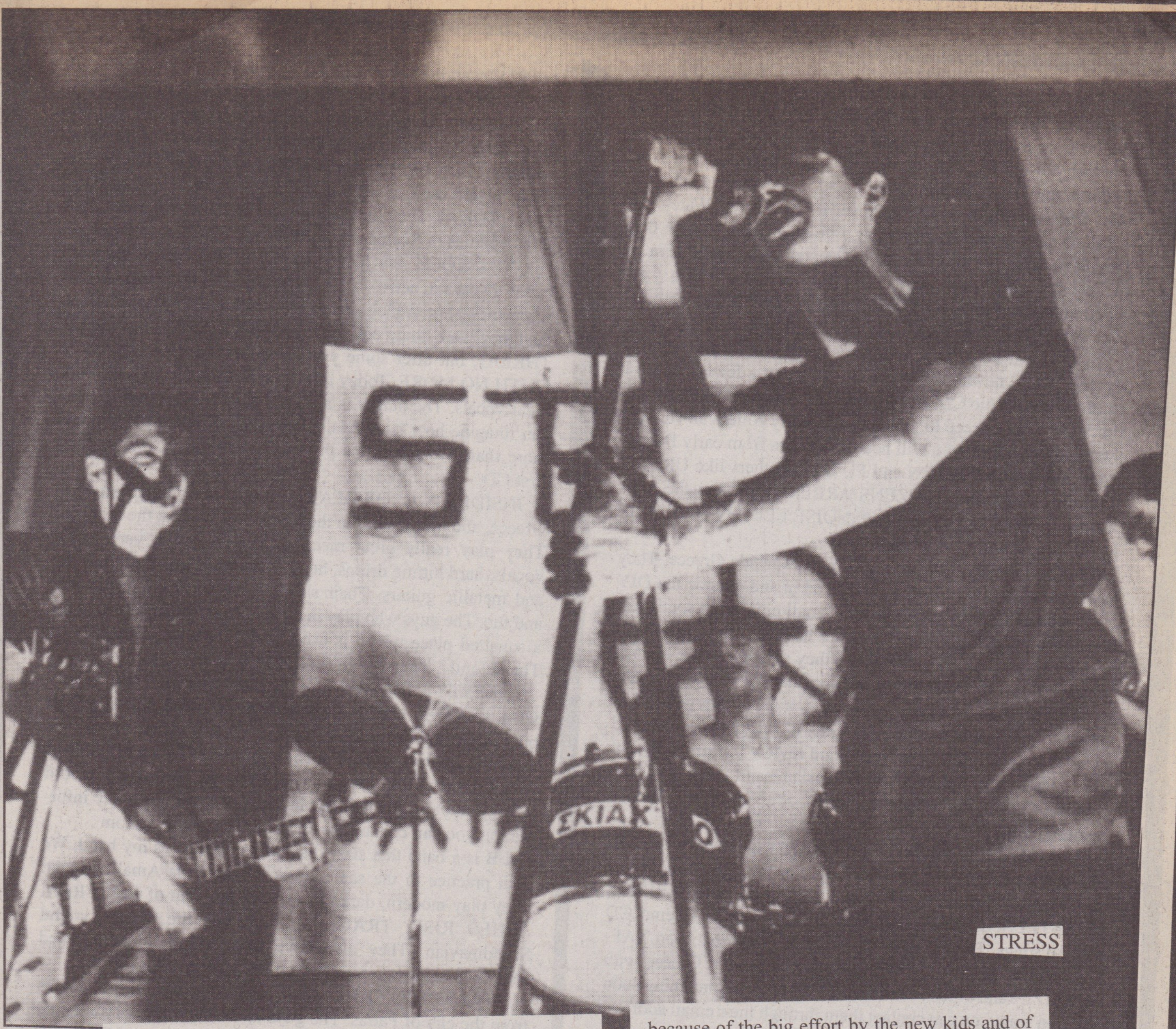
Filip Fuchs, Grohova 39, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic, Europe, email: orba@seznam.cz, website: www.seeyouinhell.cz

More contacts:
www.insanesociety.net, www.impregnate.wz.cz,
www.malarie.ind.cz, www.maskcontrol.com,
www.damagedonerecords.com,
www.insanesociety.net/phobia,
www.sweb.cz/samuel.records, www.ragedischords.tk,
ultima.ratio@seznam.cz

GREECE

Hello dear punk rockers all over the globe! This is Panos Asthma from *Immigrant* zine and the city of Athens, Greece. For most of you Greece and Athens are only ancient places, feta cheese, ass-fucking, sun, islands, good food, the Olympic Games and other things except DIY punk music. To be honest the Greek punk scene is not the biggest in the world but still very vibrant. I also have to mention that our anarchist, autonomist, anti-globalist, and anti-authority movements are much more active than the punk scene, but in my opinion this is something good. But as a punk rocker I want to see the DIY punk scene of Greece even bigger and better than its current state. Let me make it clear that in this scene report I'll talk only about bands and things that have to do with DIY punk. There are lots of bands/promoters/distros who pretend they are HC/punk but I won't waste my time talking about those losers. I also won't talk about all the DIY bands because I don't like members of some of these bands.

Punk started in Greece back in the late '70s and early '80s with bands like STRESS (1980), CHAOS GENERATION (1982), BIRTHWARD (1982) and others. The punk movement became stronger after the mid-'80s until the mid-'90s, especially in the cities of Athens and Thessaloniki. At this time buildings were squatted in both cities and in other cities around Greece. The politics of these times were a strong motivational force. Punk in those days was mostly political and there were a lot of active bands. Some of them released a demo or were playing shows for fun, and others released records on Greek and international DIY labels. The most important bands from this period to check out are: GOULAG (1985) from Thessaloniki, NAFTIA (1988) from Thessaloniki, NEGATIVE STANCE—best Greek band (1989) from Athens, CHAOTIC END (1989) from Athens, ANASA STAHTI ("Breath Ash," 1992) from Athens, PANIKOS (1988) from Thessaloniki, ALT-TC (1994) from the island of Corfu, and STATELESS OF THE UNIVERSE (1995) from Thessaloniki. These are the bands that I can think of right now, and most of them toured around Europe during their time. Of



course this list of bands of this period with releases is much longer, and none are now active. I also have to mention that those bands were playing only DIY shows in squats or in places where the shows were organized by punks for the punks. In those days it was very popular to do shows in open places like parks, squares, universities, etc. Same time you had lots of fanzines that were covering the punk and the underground music of the DIY (garage, early grunge, psychobilly, etc.) and lots of radio shows mostly from illegal radio stations.

I think this is enough for you to know about the early days of Greek punk. If you want to know more you should check the links I'll give in the end for further information, mp3s, etc.

THE PRESENT

The present scene is not as active as it used to be mostly because of the lack of bands, especially between 1996 and 2001. Very few shows from both local and worldwide bands and no releases, made it, basically, a dead period. Things started getting better around 2002 when new bands started to play and many new and young people got involved. Another very good thing is that many bands from all over started visiting the Greek squats again, and that's because of the big effort by the new kids and of course of the few older punks that are still active. Another important reason that helped this was that scenes around Greece started to get active again. Now bands can tour Eastern Europe, something which was not possible before 2000 because of the fucked up situation that those countries were in (Communism, wars, etc).

BANDS

HIBERNATION is in my opinion the best band from Greece. What makes this band special is that Alekos and Gianna (who are also married with kids) are some of the oldest and most active people in the scene. Their role back in the early '90s was very important for the development of the local scene. Alekos also used to play in CHAOTIC END and FORGOTTEN PROPHECY. Musically, HIBERNATION has the typical Greek crust sound, metallic with pissed off screaming vocals. With this band you get both male and female vocals that kick ass. HIBERNATION is a political-ecological band and that's the main theme of their lyrics. They've been

playing for many years now and have completed two European tours. The last couple of years they weren't that active cause of the birth of their son but are now back on track and plan to rehearse for shows this summer. They have two 7"s out on Malaria and Power It Up records, and a year before released their first full length on Skuld/Power it Up records. Watch out for their records and an upcoming European tour. I know that they have offers for shows even in the states so I wish them to make it one day over there. Contact them at: hibernation_hc@yahoo.com or by mail at HIBERNATION, Po Box 24107, 111 10 Athens, Greece

NOISE LEFTOVER is a fantastic fresh band from north of Athens. I have never seen these kids live, but a few days ago I received their demo CD. It is a hard kick in the ass! They are the first band from Greece to play original, early American HC. On their six-song demo you will hear influences from early Boston bands like GANG GREEN and FU'S, and others like URBAN WASTE, VOID, and CITIZENS ARREST. For sure the most promising band! Contact them at: NOISE LEFTOVER, Kristali 11, 151-26, Marousi, Athens-Greece

HASMA is the most famous DIY band inside Greece. They have sold over 4000 CDs and are loved in and outside the DIY punk scene. HASMA comes from a small city in the south east of Greece but for the last five years has lived in Athens, and been playing since 1994. Musically they play a mixture of rock 'n' roll-punk with hardcore and rock influences. They have self-released three CDs and have played almost everywhere in Greece. If you are into melodic, rock 'n' roll punk you should check them out. They got a very good review in *Razorcake* but were incorrectly identified as a Russian band….the guy was probably stoned while writing the review. Email: xasma@punk.gr

EPITHANATIOS ROGHOS ("Rattle") hails from a small city in the north of Greece, Kastoria, but have since moved to the city of Thessaloniki. The band used to be called ERIMOS ("WASTELAND") and under this name released a demo CD with 10 songs. Their sound is a mixture of crust between NAFTIA and TRAGEDY. They played shows around Greece with BOXED IN and others. I think they will release something soon so if you want you can contact them through their email address: solitary_hc@yahoo.com.

RATS IN THE MAZE used to be called NO LOGO but they decided to change their name after the replacement of their drummer. RITM could be easily described as a garage punk band with a melodic pop touch to their sound. I have seen them live many times and have only good memories of their performances. I heard that their new songs are more punk rock so I am really looking forward to a new release. They have a DIY CD out and you can order it directly from them. Contact them at: costas@indyvisuals.net

VODKA JUNIORS is a thrashy punk band that reminds of PROPAGHANDI and RKL. They have been playing for more then five years and have released three CDs and two demos on their own label, Cannonball Records. You can find out more about them at their website www.vodkajuniors.com or their label's site www.cballrec.com.

925 is a new band, playing since the summer 2004, and in the past year has improved a lot. They were playing a type of hardcore that mixed modern crust with ska and '90s punk rock, but lately they have put aside the ska influence and kept the other ones. They just released a CD by themselves with the help of Cannonball Records and completed a short European tour recently. For more information you can contact them at: peio925@yahoo.com

SATAN REJECTS hails from the city of Kavala, a very important city for the present Greek DIY network. If you are fan of early UK punk rock you will just love this band. Imagine something between the VARUKERS and THE RESTARTS. Their singer used to sing also for the fantastic grind band TAKA TUKA!. They have a tape which you could order from Villa Amalias or Scarecrow distro.

ONE BLOCK SOCIETY is one of the oldest hardcore bands that is still active. They started in 1995 and I can say that when they started they were much better. The reason? Back then they were doing covers of URBAN WASTE and MINOR THREAT, but after some years they started doing covers of FAITH NO MORE. Today their sound is metalcore with technical vocals. The singer is a huge fan of Mike Patton so you can imagine how it sounds. After many years of playing and more than two break-ups the band managed to release their first CD.

INSIDIOUS BROWBEAT is one of the crazier bands in Greece, and in my opinion the best Greek band at the moment. They play really great metallic crustcore with very brutal vocals, hard hitting drums, heavy bass lines, and both melodic and metallic guitars. Their shows are always crazy, chaotic, and fun. The guys who play in the band are also responsible for a squatted place which is used for DIY shows in the city of Thessaloniki. They haven't released anything yet!

LIBERTY IN DISEASE is my band so I can't say exactly what we sound like…our influences are from old American punk rock and Japcore, to modern crust and hard rock. We don't put any limits to our music and we don't want to label our sound since we don't have any releases yet. We plan to record in May and tour the Balkans in summer 2006. For more information you can contact me at: pandrianos@yahoo.com .

LB is a band that started at the same time as my band. We both practice in the same studio in the Villa Amalias squat. They play modern, dark HC crust in the vein of early FROM ASHES RISE, TRAGEDY, etc., but the vocals sound Scandinavian. They also have some more thrash-oriented songs. They have not yet played but will soon hit the pit!

STRAIGHTJACKET FIT is a very good band that comes from the city of Patras. The guys in the band are very talented musicians and play fantastic post HC in the vein of FUGAZI, playing technical bass lines, crazy guitar chords, and fantastic and spastic drum beats. The singing style reminds a lot of DC bands. They are the best musicians in the Greek DIY scene. There are plans for them to record but I don't know when.

DUCKY BOYS have been active for many years now. They play dirty rock 'n' roll-punk, heavily reminiscent of the DEAD BOYS, MAD SIN, and RAMONES. They have a powerful stage show and really enjoy the music they do. Recently they released their first LP on their friend's label Blind Bastard (see above). For further information please contact their label or check http://members.lycos.co.uk/duckyboys

TEENHEAT is a band I did not know much about until I saw them live with DUCKY BOYS a few days ago. The only thing I knew about them is their bassist used to do the legendary Greek, rock 'n' roll-punk zine *The Think*. The band is really good and one of the most enjoyable Greek punk bands on stage. They play fast rock 'n' roll, garage-punk with a late '70s punk touch. They have not released anything yet as they are one of the laziest Greek bands.

AAS is one of the newer Greek bands, and plays furious '77-styled punk with a later-punk touch too. Some of them run

Blind Bastard records so you can contact them through the label if interested.

PARKINSONS also hails from the city of Patras and is an important band to the Greek punk scene. They play pure, in your face punk rock with a minor street punk influence and male and female vocalists. They recently released a CD featuring all their songs.

DISHARMONIC is from Volos, a small city in the western part of central Greece. The HC scene there is still in its infancy and DISHARMONIC is the only active band I know from the area. The singer of the band does a HC zine called *Keep It Real*. Musically they play heavy metallic HC similar to '90s NYHC. They have done a CD by themselves. Contact at: hxf_prodaxionz@yahoo.com .

ZINES

The local zine scene is very weak. The most disappointing thing is that ten years ago you could find more than twenty zines that were dealing with punk, DIY, etc., and after three years there was not even one zine covering this scene. Today only three zines exist but for sure they are not enough!

Immigrant Zine is the zine that I am involved with. The idea of the zine started two years ago, and since then three issues have been released. The zine started as a very small one but the third issue (issue number two by the way because we started at zero) was 64 pages. Issue numbers zero and one are sold out. In issue two you can find interviews with BURIAL, NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS, Spacement records and PO BOX. The zine also includes many record reviews, reviews of punk shows that we attended in Greece and Germany, fanzine reviews, a comic and of course articles and columns. Many pictures are also included. The zine is 100% DIY, we give it away for free, and 90% of it is written in English. We only ask for money to cover the postage. The zine covers political and social issues that deal in one way or the other with our favorite music. The new issue (number three) is already out including interviews with ZEGOTA, SMALLTOWN, and NO RESPECT, plus the usual stuff! For orders please write us at: immigrant_zine@yahoo.com or send us a letter, your music, or whatever you like at: *Immigrant Zine*, Po Box 8442, 10010 Athens, Greece. We don't accept material from racists, fascists, sexists, homophobics, and macho losers. Next issue will be released in May with interviews with REGULATIONS, FUCKED UP, DEAN DIRG, Havoc records, HIBERNATION and more! www.immigrantzine.com

Take Your Shot is a one-man zine. It is a cut and paste hardcore zine, and until now Fotis has completed two issues. The zine is in English and I have to mention that it is very well written. Most of the interviews are really good except the ones where the bands have nothing to say—*ahem*, 100 DEMONS, *ahem*. You can still order issue number two directly from Fotis by sending him 50 cents and the postage. Issue number two includes interviews with VITAMIN X, FPO, VODKA JUNIORS, LAST PRIEST, DRI, and 100 DEMONS. Contact Fotis at: takexyourxshot@yahoo.com or send him a real letter at: Fotis Patikas, Thessalias 43, Glyka Nera 15344, Athens, Greece. His zine is really sweet!

Keep it Real is a hardcore zine that covers HC and political issues such as vegetarianism, anti-racism, sXe, etc. The guy behind this zine is the singer of DISHARMONIC and I have to say that he has done a lot for the local scene, especially his city Volos. He has completed four issues, and the last one includes interviews with: VODKA JUNIORS, STRENGTH APPROACH, BACK AGAINST THE WALL, NOTHING DONE, ONE BLOCK SOCIETY, STRAIGHTHATE and DISHARMONIC. The zine is written in Greek and printed on ecological, recycled paper. For further information you can contact Apostolis at: hxf_prodaxionz@yahoo.com

SQUATS/DIY VENUES

Squats and DIY venues here in Greece are probably the strongest part of the local punk and an important reason the DIY punk stays alive here. The squat movement started in the late '90s. Back then the whole movement of anarchism, autonomy and DIY punk was really strong with many people involved. Since then lots of buildings are squatted and today many of them still exist. All of them were 100% political squats but some were also started for housing DIY punk shows. Here I'll talk about the squats that are connected with the local DIY punk scene.

Villa Amalias is the most important squat of Athens and Greece in general. The squat started in 1990 in a building that was located on Amalias Street, but soon after the police threw everyone out. The squatters didn't give up and few months later they squatted a fantastic building in the center of Athens, which is located on Aharnon 80 & Heiden Street. Since then the municipality has tried to take the building back, mostly because it's an old building from the early 20th century. Between 1991 and 1996 the squatters went to court many times but always left as the trial winners. Today Villa Amalias today is a 15-year old squat. The place contains rooms where people live, a huge room for concerts with full equipment including a PA, bar, café, infoshop, distro, rehearsal room, exhibitions, and other stuff. Almost 98% of the DIY shows of both local and worldwide bands take place in this squat. The concert room is big and the squat in general is really large. The shows always attract more than 200 people, and most of the time there are between 300 and 400 people at the show. During those fifteen years tons of important DIY bands have visited the squat: DISORDER, DOOM, OI POLLOI, HARUM SCARUM, JENIGER, THE DAGDA, OUTCOLD, BORN DEAD ICONS, RAMBO, VITAMIN X, ANNIHILATION TIME, THE DAGDA, SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS, IMPERIAL LEATHER, BURIAL, THE NOW DENIAL, DOOMTOWN, DURANGO 95, HUMAN WASTE, THE HORROR, BOXED IN, THE LAST MILE, ENDSTAND, KAFKA, MASS GENOCIDE PROCESS, MALIGNANT TUMOUR, and FREE YOURSELF to name just a few. For the last three years I have been involved with setting up shows in the squat, and with our team we have also done Greek tours for foreign bands. If you are interested and want to play shows in Athens and in the rest of the places I describe feel free to write me (contact information at the end). We don't set up shows/tours for non-DIY, racist, fascist, sexist and rock-star wannabe bands. Villa Amalias can provide the bands with equipment (drums, amplifiers, heads and pa) as do the rest of the squats/DIY venues of Greece. We also give accommodations, free food and drinks, and of course cash for the band's expenses.

Kalidromiou Basement-Autonomous Center is another DIY venue run by some great and open-minded people. This is a political place but its inhabitants love and support DIY music, so for the last few years they have provided the space for several activities like shows (ZEGOTA, STRAIGHT CORNER, and many local bands), parties, and other fun. If you want more info about that place

BIRTHWARD

HIBERNATION

drop me a line!

Biologiko is a really important squat in the city of Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki is the second biggest city of Greece and still has a very important DIY punk scene. Back in the day Thessaloniki was home to the most important crust and punk bands, many of which toured Europe many times. The squat movement there was also very big and in general people were very dedicated to DIY punk. Today the scene is not as strong as it used to be but there are still people involved in bands, setting up shows, etc. Biologiko is a squatted part of the Biology University and it is located on the Campus of Thessaloniki. Most of the bands that have played in Villa Amalias have also played at Biologiko. It's the classic way: Patra-Athens-Thessaloniki-Kavala. ZOUNDS played there three months ago and more than 1000 people showed up—no kidding! For more information contact Stelios, who is the main guy behind Biologiko, at: stateless4@hotmail.com

Autonomous Center At Tei-Kavala is located in the city of Kavala, nine hours north of Athens, three hours north of Thessaloniki, and three hours from the Bulgarian and Macedonian borders. The city is not that big but the activities of the people involved in this place are more than a lot. This place is also a squatted part of a university, the University of Kavala. It has existed for twenty years now and is involved with many political activities. The people of this place have done lots of activities that deal with anarchism, ecology, and other topics. At the same time they organize really great shows and always help and support touring bands. The area has lot of crusties and punk people and the most of the time shows are more than great there. All the bands that have toured Greece during the last five years have visited Kavala. If you tour Greece you shouldn't miss this place. For more information contact Stelios & Diamantis at: steliosvas@yahoocom or gama@otenet.gr

There are more places and squats around Greece that house DIY shows but I don't have enough contact information for them. Feel free to write me and I'll put you in contact with people active in the cities of Patras, Heraclion-Crete, Volos-east central Greece and Xanthi-northern Greece.

DISTROS/LABELS

For many years distros were disappearing from Greece, and many people didn't even know what a distro is. Since 1998 more distros are back on the scene, so more and more DIY records are accessible to the local punks.

Scarecrow Distro is the best distro in Greece. Darek, who runs Scarecrow, started it for fun a few years ago. In the beginning he only had a few but very good titles. Today he has over 500 LPs, CDs, 7"s, tapes, zines, and shirts. In his distro you can find stuff from Havoc Records, Ebullition, Deranged, Hardcore Holocaust, 625, Sound Pollution and many more labels, with old, American, English and Finnish HC, to grind, punk rock, and rock 'n' roll. You should check it out because its one of the best European distros for sure. He also has all the available Greek titles. And the prices? The cheapest you can find. For more check www.scarecrow.gr (or www.punk.gr/scarecrow) or email Darek at: sdistro@o2.pl.

Last Scream is a distro run by Alekos-HIBERNATION. Alekos used to distribute records for many years but after the birth of his son gave up due to the lack of free time. But for the last three years he is back in the game, and his catalog has some really hot crust and pissed off HC from Europe and the States. You can check his catalog at: www.punk.gr/last-scream/ or you can email him at: hibernation_hc@yahoo.com. In his distro you will find all the available HIBERNATION releases.

Villa Amalias Distro is a distro run by the squat. Our goal is to have a distro with some good DIY titles at every show, so people can have a direct access to good music. We carry only DIY records from labels like: Havoc, Six Weeks Records, Yellow Dog, Communichaos, Putrid Filth Conspiracy, Instigate, and others. We carry everything from LPs to tapes and some zines. If you want us to sell your stuff please feel free to write me and we will work something out (contact information at the end of the report).

We Don't Fight It is a distro started for fun by trades but today has become really huge. If you want you can check them out: www.geocities.com/wedontfightit or email Giannis at: trade_is_more_human@yahoo.gr

7 Inch Distro is a small distro located in the city of Volos. The guy who runs it seems to be nice but I'm really not into the records he distributes. In his list you will find mainly releases from metalcore labels and some South American HC. For more information you can check his very well done website: www.7inch.gr.

Blind Bastard Records is a new DIY label run by some great guys who, beside the label, help DIY concerts by providing a backline and help in one way or another. Their first official release is the vinyl of DUCKY BOYS but have done some CDs. Check their website: www.blindbastard.com

Cannonball Records is the only DIY label existing in Greece. To be honest they are not that active lately due to serious financial problems. The label began to support the local punk scene, especially bands associated with the label. Since 1998 they have done some releases, the majority of which by the VODKA JUNIORS. Kostis, the singer and guitarist of VJ, is the main guy behind Cannonball. Recently they released the new 925 CD EP. You can find out more about them on their official website, which is www.cballrec.com.

RECORD STORES

I guess if you are a real punk rocker, when you travel you like to go record shopping. So if you ever visit Athens there are only two punk rock record stores that you can visit. Of course Athens has lots of record stores but only two of them specialize in HC/punk. To be honest the punk record market in Athens is very weak if you compare it to other kinds of music. If you are into metal, '70s hard rock, garage, etc., then the Greek record stores might be your paradise.

Jinx Independent Outlet is two years old, started by a good friend who also plays in the emo band NO BALANCE (www.nobalance.net). The motive for the record store was to bring to Athens records that never reached the city before. The store specializes in emo, modern hardcore, sludge, math-core, indie, post hardcore, some punk, electro, and other experimental sounds. The shop is small but the atmosphere is very friendly. If you are visiting Athens don't miss the chance to visit Jinx. This store is also the exclusive distributor of *Maximum Rocknroll* for Greece. Its address is: Asklipiou 24, Athens, phone: (+30)-210-3645069, www.jinx.gr, and very close to the Panepistimio metro station.

Rhythm Records is more of a traditional HC/punk record store. Here you can find lots of classic HC-punk, ska, sXe, metalcore, math, old school, crust, auk, garage, and surf, oi, some stone and some indie. The store is pretty old and it's a classic meeting place for the local fans. Address: Emanouil Mpenaki 74, Exarhia-Athens, phone: (+30)-210-3841550.

I know that every punk deep inside is a metalhead so if you're ever in Athens and want to check for more than punk records I would recommend you to go to the Monastiraki area (classic touristy area) and check the record stores on Ifestou street. There you will find lots of rare '60s, '70s, and '80s records, and all types of music from psychedelic to black metal. If you want some extreme metal you should check Metal Era records and Rock City records in the center of Athens. For rare and expensive first copies of old UK and US punk, psychedelia, blues, metal, new wave and more, you should also check Art Rat records, Zoodohou Pigis 48, Exarhia-Athens. Phone (+30)-210-3848001.

VEGETERIAN FOOD

There are very few vegetarian restaurants in Greece and I recommend you avoid visiting them since they are trendy restaurants that sell shitty expensive food. Of course that doesn't mean that vegetarians must become meat eaters in Greece to survive. There are many things that vegetarians can eat in every Greek restaurant. The cheapest vegetarian snack is Pita without meat. You can ask for that at souvlaki stores. It can also be referred to as ecological souvlaki. This is the best snack for the local vegeterians since it costs less than a euro. Other things that a vegetarian should try in Greece are spinach pie, cheese pie, and the other types of veg-cheese pies. You should also try gemista which is tomato filled with rise and other vegetarian things. Of course you should try the classic Greek salad that is really powerful but maybe a bit expensive. Generally the Greek cuisine is full of vegetarian meals; we just don't call them vegetarian. So if you are in a Greek tavern, ask for meals without meat and you will find a really huge menu!

I am sure that there are much more DIY punk happenings in Greece but I do not know everything. I hope I helped you to get an idea about what's going on here. If you need further information or traveling to Greece feel free to write me and I will provide you with the best advice. I have been involved with setting up shows and tours inside Greece for foreign DIY HC/punk bands for three years now. We have done shows for ANNIHILATION TIME, OUTCOLD, BURIAL, DOOMTOWN, BORN DEAD ICONS, THE NOW DENIAL, THE HORROR, BOXED IN, SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS, IMPERIAL LEATHER, VITAMIN X, RAMBO, MADAME GERMEN, DEAD STOP, ENDSTAND, HUMAN WASTE, THE LAST MILE, DURANGO 95, KAFKA, ANTIMANIAX, PLEDGE ALLIANCE, COCKROACH, SMALLTOWN, ZEGOTA, MONSTER, and many more. We offer cash for the expenses of the band, food, drinks, and of course a place to stay and shower. If you have a band or are booking a tour feel free to contact me at Pandrianos@yahoo.com. For shows you can also contact Kostas at: classtension@yahoo.com, especially if you are an anarcho punk/crust band. During the winter of 2005-2006 I won't be in Greece but I can still help you out!

LINKS

Not much can be found online about the Greek scene right now. Greeks are fucking lazy, never updating or upgrading their sites, but you can check the following: www.diymusic.org, www.asthmazone.com (this is my website and is still under heavy construction), www.morethansounds.blogspot.com (the webpage of an exotic partner of mine in life and *Immigrant zine*), www.immigrantzine.com (our killer zine), and www.punk.gr/english (info about old Greek punk). These are the links that come to mind right now.

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—Panos Asthma

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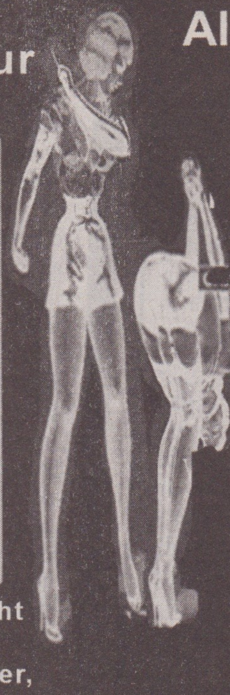

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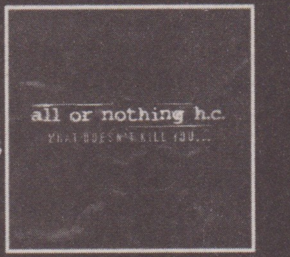

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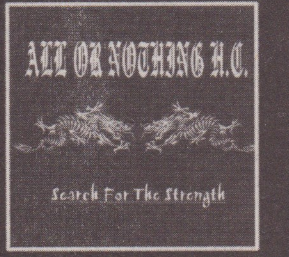

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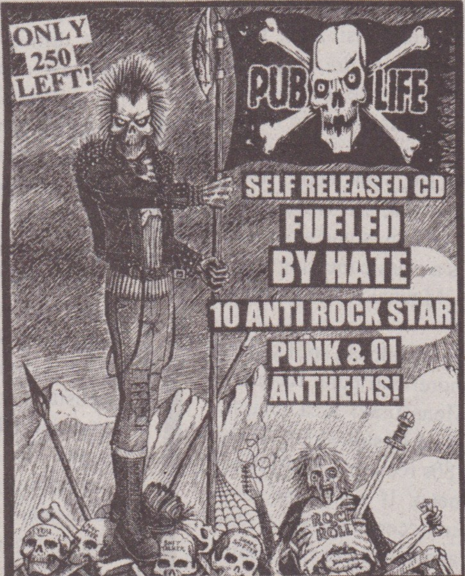

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Neuron "Gleichschritt" Cd Wicked grindcore from Germany. Some of the best I've heard. Neuron is all about grinding, thick, powerful grindcore
Gaurithoth "Perverse" Cd Raging European Black Metal. A little like Impaled Nazarene, Gaurithoth explodes on their debut album of pure insanity.
Mesrine "I Choose Murder" Cd Essential grindcore / Metal with a style to that similar to Dahmer This is awesome grindcore.
Diskonto "Watch Us Burn" Cd They are from Sweden so you should already know this is awesome. Their best album to date for sure.
Accion Mutante "The Complete Discography" Cd Everything they have recorded so far. Highly Essential. Total Crust / Metal.
Wartorn "Adolph Bushler" 7" Scandinavian thrash like State of Fear. This is limited to 300 Copies only.
To What End? "Concealed Below The Surface" Cd / Lp This one will completely blow you away. So much heavier and harder than the last. Think Wolfpack. I consider this band to be the best Swedish Hardcore band going right now. That's how good this is.
Misery "Production Through Destruction" Cd Re-release of this hard to find classic crust album from the early 90's
Pisshead Blues Band "s/t" Cd Blues lounge rock spewing from members of Civil Disobedience and Misery. Nice and relaxing and awesome.
Uncurbed "A Nightmare In Daylight" Cd Reissue from the 90's. Swedish hardcore that'll knock your socks off with brand new art.
Words That Burn "Profits of the Christ" 7" $4.00 ppd US / $6.00 World
Brutal crusty metal in every aspect. This is the best 7" I've heard in a long time. Comes with a full color cover making it one of the nicest eps I have seen.
Audio Kollaps "Music From An Extreme, Sick World" Cd / Lp A brutal mix of Crust, Grind and Metal. The best combination possible.
Head Hits Concrete "Thy Kingdom Come Undone" Cd Discography of their stuff to date. Head splitting ferocious grindcore.
Homoiratus "Apocalypse" Cd Pulverizing Grindcore / Death Metal from Greece. Comparisons to Rotten sound come to mind.
Beyond Description "A Road To A Brilliant Future" Cd / Lp New Cd of these Japanese hardcore legends. Comes w/ 3 Bonus Tracks.
Despite "No Promise of Tomorrow" Cd / Lp Gut wrenching Hardcore / Grind / Punk from the deepest bowels of WI. w/ Spanish Translations.
Urban Head Raw "Human Instinct" Cd Japanese Crust. **Agathocles** "Alive And Mincing" Cd (Ltd to 1000)
Words That Burn "Spawning Ground For Hatred" Cd / Lp (Mailorder gets Ltd to 100 Red Vinyl)
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ABC NO RIO

This is the second part of a two-part story outlining the early history of the hardcore/punk matinee at ABC No Rio, an all ages DIY space in the Lower East Side of New York's Manhattan borough. Where we left off, ABC's early movers and shakers were describing their early commitment to making ABC an anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-homophobic space; we pick up their story there...

Compiled and written by Vikki Law. Photos by Chris Boarts and Fly.

ABC was safe enough that the few punk parents in the scene felt comfortable enough to occasionally bring their children, pushing the idea of all ages matinees. China Doll Martens, now a columnist for Chris Boarts' punk newsletter *Slug and Lettuce*, remembers driving with her housemates from Baltimore to New York to see Born Against at No Rio. There, she met Amy, one of the singers from Nausea, and her daughter Nadia, who was just a year or two older than China's three-year-old daughter. The two stood outside among the kids drinking forties on the sidewalk and talked about how disturbing it was that, although they wore black and Amy was, in China's eyes, "the crustiest of the crusty, always in black and patches and dreads," their daughters wanted to wear pink dresses like girly-girls. Nadia had also learned that the best way to get the candy that she wasn't supposed to have was to ask a drunk punk.

The safety of No Rio, however, seemed to come at the expense of the ethnic, racial and class diversity found elsewhere. Esneider—a working-class immigrant from Colombia—felt this split: The violent, nationalistic and homophobic shows at CBGB's attracted working class and immigrant kids. "The scene that was more welcoming to my political ideas was more white, middle-class, privileged kids that didn't understand their privilege. They didn't understand what it was like to be an immigrant. So it was really weird that way."

This was the period when America was seen as the great "melting pot," when new immigrants were pressured to assimilate quickly and raise their kids as "Americans." Not as hyphenated Americans who were proud of their roots, just Americans. At schools, teachers discouraged children from speaking their mother tongues and, if their parents spoke English, would take these parents aside and tell them that, if they wanted their children to succeed in America, they should only speak English to them.

The hardcore scene at ABC reflected this sentiment. "It was really rare that I found someone who would take the time to listen to my broken English," Esneider recalled.

"Back then, there were no Latino bands, no bands that sang in Spanish." If those around him were aware of scenes outside their

Mike Bullshit

Photos this page from the collection of Mike Bullshit except for the Crudos photo by Chris Boarts

Born Against

Los Crudos

border, it was the one in Europe—and even that was limited to bands that sang in English.

"Because I came from the Colombian scene, I knew there was a whole world out there," Esneider recalled. "There were scenes in Italy, Poland, Chile, Peru, China. But this scene didn't seem to care about other countries. So I started feeling uncomfortable."

"That would have been the same for other shows, I think," said Akiko, who had toured with the Italian hardcore band Raw Power and the Finnish band Riistetyt before moving to New York. "At least those who attended ABC were definitely more sensitive to the issue. Actually, being Japanese was in a way beneficial because lots of kids were into Japanese hardcore."

Esneider wasn't the only person who felt that his identity and his concerns were often overlooked or not understood by others at No Rio. Katherine Arnoldi, the author/artist of *The Amazing True Story of a Teenage Single Mom*, recalled going to No Rio and reading about being a teen mom. "I was sort of an anomaly to them," she said. "I was talking about teen moms and that wasn't really where everyone else's interest lay. They were doing 'I was a junkie' stuff. JD [Rage] did a lot of rants about great junkie poets. I was never a junkie. I don't have a tattoo. I don't even wear jewelry."

Still, Katherine remembers the place—and people—fondly. "That's not to say that everyone's not welcome. Everyone who showed up was part of the group, not like other places like the Kitchen and PS 122 where there was an 'in' group."

Eak agrees: "What made it so fabulous, so cool at the time was how it was incredibly inclusive. Everyone was welcome." He recalled that every Sunday after the reading ended, "we went to Alias to have dinner all together—or to First Street Café, which was still around at the time. It would foster that sense of camaraderie."

It wasn't just the poets and performance artists. Chris Boarts also remembers the sense of community created by the matinees every Saturday. "There was a group of us that came every week, no matter what band was playing. It was a social thing. We all knew each other. If someone showed up who we didn't know, we'd ask, 'Who are you? Where are you from?' and generally tried to get to know them. I always felt people were pretty welcoming."

Charles and the rest of Rorschach would pile into a car and drive in from New Jersey every Saturday for the shows. "At that time, that was the only time you saw all those people from all five boroughs and New Jersey. You didn't go to school with them, work with them, hang out with them," he remembered. "We never saw each other during the week. We never called each other and asked, 'Are you going?' You would go there every Saturday and inevitably everyone was there. And when you left every Saturday night, there was that feeling of, 'I can't wait till next Saturday afternoon.' There was that anticipation the other six days a week." From 1989 to 1991, Charles was at 50 of the 52 shows at ABC each year.

Dave K & Jon Reed

Photo courtesy of Mike Bullshit

Civil Disobedience

Photo by Chris Boarts

After an especially well-attended show, the volunteers and bands would have dinner. "I'd take 40 bucks if it had been a really good show and we'd all go down to a vegetarian Chinese restaurant in Chinatown," Mike recalled.

At ABC, barriers between performers and audience were broken down. Unlike other venues, No Rio didn't have a backstage where performers could separate themselves from everyone else.

Pat Cremins remembered feeling the lack of a wall between audience and performers. "We would do these performances there and we would have ten people sitting there all night. It was amazing," she said. "It was the opposite of professionalism."

Sometimes this lack of a wall was keenly felt by the audience: "My most memorable experience was reading in JD's series with Grace Period," recalled writer Jan Schmidt. "Grace spray-painted on Venetian blinds which she'd hung from two huge tripods. Then she pulled out an acetylene torch and lit it up. The place went crazy in fear of fire, then she put that out and threw an old electric typewriter at the blinds but it bounced back into the audience, almost killing Tamra Plotnik."

Of course, not all interactions between performers and audience were as extreme. "One of the best things about ABC was meeting bands. There was Econochrist," Freddy recalled. "I remember bands like Citizens Arrest and Born Against playing to 20 or 30 people."

One of Mike's favorite memories was of performing with Go!: "You knew everyone. They were into your band, you were into their band. People would come out to see you and it was amazing."

Sometimes new collaborations would emerge: God is My Co-Pilot played one of No Rio's earlier hardcore matinees. Fly, who had recently met God-Co guitarist Craig Flanigan, counts this show as one of her favorite ABC memories. "I went to the show and I was totally blown away. They were amazing and became my favorite band instantly. Later, I would join the band playing bass and touring the world—little did I know!"

And, although they may have viewed Katherine Arnoldi as a "goody-goody," several of the regulars of both Matthew Courtney's Open Cabaret and No Rio's various readings, including Carl Watson, Jennifer Blowdryer and Matthew Courtney, collaborated with her on a performance at the Nuyorican Poet's Café.

Bands also started—or got their start—at ABC No Rio.

"One day I was sitting at ABC and someone said, 'There's another Latino kid here,'" Esneider remembered. "He didn't speak English either. We talked—we were both first-generation immigrants and, halfway jokingly said, 'Let's start a band.' I was joking but he was serious about it."

Freddy, who was never in the band, remembered the group's beginnings as well. "When Huasipungo first started, the drummer and guitarist were from Peru and had just moved to New York. They had been involved in the Peruvian scene."

Huasipungo's existence helped break through some of the invisible barriers Esneider had felt. "Esneider's band was very influential to a lot of people," Mel recalled. "We were so used to this one particular type of music and he's bringing in all these other types of bands. He really opened up at least my eyes to the fact that we're not the epicenter."

Although eventually Ivan, the guitarist who had

come up with the idea, and Francisco, his brother and the group's drummer, left both the band and the city, Huasipungo continued with musicians who often were involved with ABC's hardcore matinees.

Charles Maggio credits ABC with giving his band Rorschach its start. "I was at a show at the club Downtown Beirut and Citizens Arrest gave me a flier for a show at ABC No Rio. We were struggling to get shows and every place we went, we were told, 'Send us a demo and we'll give you a call.' And they never did. We went to the show and walked up to Mike Bullshit. We gave him the demo and told him we'd like to play a show and here's our demo and, before we could say, 'Give us a call,' he said, 'How about December 28th'

"So, less than a month later, it was us, Citizens Arrest and six other people. And we went there every week since."

In his mind, No Rio was not a stepping stone. "It was No Rio as the only stone. It was the only place that would let you play. You didn't have to know someone or do a dance or jump through hoops."

Melissa York has a similar story. She remembered when Born Against needed a drummer: "And I was like, 'I'll try out!' And I was awful so they were like, 'Let's just be friends.' And I was so crushed. Then I was walking down St. Mark's Place and Rich Trash said 'I heard Born Against didn't want you. Wanna join our band?' And so I did."

That band, the Manacled, played its first show at ABC. "We were really awful. None of us knew how to play our instruments," Mel recalled. "But we were embraced, even though we sucked. And it wouldn't have happened anywhere else." For the year of its existence, the Manacled's shows were only at ABC. "Well, we might have played in Long Island once."

"Practically everyone who sent me a tape got a show," Mike recalled. "I even booked bands I didn't like. I wanted it to be a space where people could play and grow."

Poison Idea

The one exception—which ABC was to become famous for—was the "no racist, sexist or homophobic" policy.

"The non-homophobic was set in stone," said Esneider.

"It was like, 'I'm gay and I'm booking the shows,'" Mike recalled. "'And if you hate gays and think they're doing something wrong, then you shouldn't play here.'"

Mike remembered a band called In Your Face that wanted to play at ABC. "They had a song called 'The Faggot Stomp.'" When Mike called them on it, the group was apologetic. "They were like, 'We were really young and stupid and didn't know what we were doing, but we don't think that anymore' and so I booked them."

The start of the first Gulf War in 1991 elicited outcry and protests across the country. In New York, it also served to galvanize and politicize many of the kids both in and out of the hardcore scene.

"We didn't have the hindsight we do now with two Gulf Wars behind us. It hadn't been established as a given that there wouldn't be a draft. The prospect was something we took seriously," recalled Dave Powell, who was draft age when the war began.

"We'd all grown up with lots of movies about Vietnam and resistance to the draft and the anti-war movement. And you'd see Vietnam vets everywhere. You'd go to school and step over someone in the street who was a Vietnam vet. But it was something in the past.

"Even with Reagan doing all these interventions in the "80s, it still seemed kind of distant. No one thought they'd be sent there. Then, with the first Gulf War, people were afraid there was going to be a draft." Even apathetic, apolitical kids were worried: "People who knew I was political and who were usually pretty cynical about that were calling me at home with questions. Kids that I went to high school with that weren't into politics were getting politicized."

Nausea

Manacled

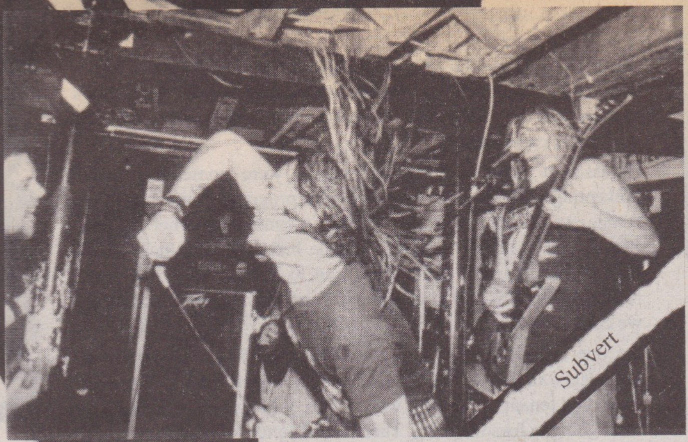
All photos this page by Chris Boarts except photo of Manacled c/o Mike Bullshit

Anti-war sentiment appeared in punk zines and newsletters. Chris Boarts ran photos of anti-war protests in *Slug and Lettuce*. The cover of *Profane Existence* proclaimed, "In order to satisfy their mania for conquest, our lives are squandered" with a photo of a banner that read: "Exxon is not worthy dying for. Troops out now!" "If you went to an anti-war demo, you saw half of the kids you'd see at ABC," remembered Dave. "There was a big poster up at ABC that said, 'Going to the Gulf? See you when you get back.' And a picture of a kid with his face all fucked up."

"There were kids going to ABC who were already starting to do Black Bloc type actions even then," he recalled. At Times Square for an anti-war march, there were kids from ABC who were masked up and burning flags and barricades. And the cops weren't doing anything! The protest culture of the '80s was a lot looser in terms of police response."

At ABC, Dave booked a benefit for the War Resisters' League. "The way I billed it on the flier was, 'If you have questions about the draft, selective service, etc., come to the show and talk to someone from the War Resisters' League about it.'"

Pete, the boy who, once upon a time, had been chased out of CB's for



Subvert

wearing make-up and having "too much hair," agreed to play with his band, the New Jersey-based Sticks and Stones. Pete approached another New Jersey band, Headstrong, to play and Fred Alva added Seizure and Dreamhouse onto the bill.

"The show gave people the opportunity to identify a group that was doing something about the war. And, even though it was ABC, the [political] lines hadn't been drawn yet and there was still the possibility that kids would come who might, for economic or other reasons, be thinking about joining the army. I know at least one kid who went to shows at ABC ended up in the Gulf. So it wasn't like we were preaching to the converted."

Esneider remembers being shocked that quite a few kids who came to the shows had signed up for the military, lured by the promise of a college education. "In Colombia, the military was compulsory," he stated. "So everyone in the scene was trying to get out of it. And then here, people were voluntarily signing up!" One of the members of SFA, the band that, only two years earlier, had made such an impression on Chris Boarts, was in the Reserves. "I mean, how can you preach anarchy onstage and then be in the military?"

The show was packed. Many of the kids came away with information and literature. The War Resisters' League made some money. Later that year, Dave booked another benefit, inviting Reservist-turned-conscientious-objector Sam Lwim to speak between bands.

As New York City real estate started to become the dog-eat-dog, money-ruled market that it is now, No Rio's role as a space for alternative culture and politics became even more important.

"There was no other place in the city doing shows with the philosophy that ABC No Rio had—that being totally of and by and for the kids," remembered Chris Boarts. Unlike clubs and bars like CBGB's or, later, Bond Street Café or Coney Island High, ABC No Rio's hardcore shows were volunteer-run with the bands and the kids, not the bar and the profit, as the focus.

Before No Rio had opened its doors to the kids who didn't fit into the existing hardcore scene, shows were sporadic. "People did shows wherever—empty lots, squats," Esneider recalled. "ABC was a place that did DIY shows on a regular basis, which changed everything."

Similarly, No Rio provided a space for the neighborhood squatters and politicos. The Anarchist Switchboard, the local hangout and infoshop conveniently located on St Mark's Place, right off the park, closed in 1989. Its successor, Sabotage Books, lasted only a brief period, closing in 1990. "When that fell apart, another place opened on 7th Street between B and C," recalled Steven. That space, A-Central, lasted only a year or two before it too closed. No Rio, however, lasted as one of the few venues open to many of the fringe neighborhood groups.

Not everyone felt welcome with this new direction. Pat Cremins stopped performing at No Rio in 1991. "I had a feeling it got less active. It didn't seem like it was open in the same way," she recalled. "It also seemed to get more politicized in a more pointed way."

The City, in the meantime, was unrelenting in its efforts to get No Rio out.

"Lou, Fly and I were talking about de-centering," recalled Steven Englander. "What do you do if you don't have the space? How do you do No Rio programming without the space? One of the ideas was publication."

Of course, it's very difficult to publish a hardcore show or an improvised duet or the sense of camaraderie felt after a reading when everyone heads half a block away to eat rice and beans at Alias. Or—in the days before widespread Internet use—to foster that sense of community that people were finding in that run-down tenement building.

One Friday night in April, the poets had a benefit for *Vital Pulse*, a literary magazine they were creating. It was slated to start at 8 pm and go till 8 the next morning with 50 poets scheduled to perform. "I gave them fifteen minutes each," recalled Margaret, who helped organize the event. When ranter, raver. and Cabaret regular David Hubberman's time came, he was nowhere to be found. And so Mike Tyler, who had run the readings in the '80s and who was the MC for this twelve-hour "Incubation Benefit," got on-stage, stomped his feet, waved his arms and ranted and raved, which was just what David Hubberman would have done.

Those twelve hours brought in about 500 dollars.

"I never saw a finished copy," remembered Margaret, who had tried to interview Carl Watson for the magazine. ("It was kind of a disaster because I didn't know what to ask him and he didn't know what to say.")

Eak remembered that the money got stolen.

"The place had been robbed during the day while I was out," Steven said. Five hundred dollars and the computer monitor were gone, but the thief had left the actual computer itself.

Go!

Chris Boarts, ABC No Rio photo by: Fly, right side ABC photo by: Chris Boarts, Go! photo c/o Mike Bullshit

Defiance

Final Warning

Submachine

"It was the son of someone who used to live here and he still had keys. I heard the footsteps on the stairs—I was living here alone—and came out and found him. Apparently the locks had never been changed. I had just been handed a set of keys and had never asked. After that, though, I changed all the locks."

Fly remembers the incident a bit differently. "Me and Steven came down to the gallery once and there was this kid there. We were like, 'How'd you get in here?' And he was like, 'I have keys. I used to live here.'

"'Yeah, but what are you doing here now?'" she recalls wondering. "I can't remember his name but I used to see his tag all over the neighborhood for a while."

That break-in wasn't an isolated incident. "People used to break into No Rio all the time," said Fly, shaking her head at the incredulous idea that No Rio had anything worth stealing. "We used to joke that it was just practice."

Break-ins and robberies weren't the only problem. "One time I heard someone pounding against the door," Steven recalled. "When I went to open it, they tried to push themselves in. I threw my weight against it, but finally they pushed me back and one of them showed me his badge. There were two of them—they wanted to use one of the empty units upstairs to survey the drug dealers across the street. I told them no—it was creepy enough living in this building alone. Plus I was the only one living here and so it would be obvious who let them in. The cop got real mad and said it would be a shame if I got arrested for resisting arrest, which I took to mean that they were going to beat me up. They didn't though and they never came back."

Harassment was common too. Locks were sometimes glued, preventing volunteers from getting in or programs from happening. "Once we had to have the reading around the corner at Thad [Rutkowski]'s house because someone had glued the locks of No Rio for like the 90th time. That used to happen a lot," Margaret recalled. "Once we did the reading in Tompkins Square Park because we couldn't get in."

No one knew for sure who was gluing the locks. However, the volunteers all knew that the City was doing its best to harass its unwanted tenant. "The City was always coming in and saying they were going to fix something. Then they'd punch holes in the wall and want to evict us for having holes in the wall," remembered Fly.

"They came by to turn on the boiler and they actually blew it up," Steven recounted. "They fried it so it didn't work." Instead of dealing with HPD (who had blown up the boiler to begin with), Steven called one of the neighborhood squatters to help him fix the problem. "He thought they had done it on purpose because there was no reason for them to do anything with the electricity for the boiler."

At one point, the City's actions drove Fly out: "In the spring of '91, we went to Washington, DC, for some conference on non-profit arts groups. HPD came and broke into the floor where I was staying. They took everything. And they put two big deadbolts on the door.

"My immediate response was to hang out the window on a chain link ladder and try to bust through the window with a sledgehammer. I won't say who was hanging on to the other end of the ladder so as not to incriminate anyone. I was trying to bust the window with a sledgehammer and the window would not bust. So I was on a ladder and the ladder was vibrating and I was looking down

All photos this page by Chris Boarts

part of the original collective

at the sidewalk and thinking, 'I'm gonna die!'

"I went to a squat where someone told me how to drill the lock. So I drilled and drilled and drilled and finally, the lock broke.

"I moved to Gargoyle Mechanique [a performance space on Avenue B] after that. I didn't want to jeopardize the space by being there."

"It was really hard to escape that siege mentality, especially when you're alone in the building," Steven remembered. "It's one thing when there were a bunch of people living here and it's another thing when you're here alone."

Fly wasn't the only volunteer who left because of No Rio's adverse conditions.

After one year, Margaret Petrov stopped running the poetry readings: "It was just frustrating—locks wouldn't be working half the time, it'd be freezing, mice would be running around," she recalled. "I showed up one Sunday and said, 'Look, this is my last reading. Whoever wants to do it can do it.'"

Eak, who decided he wanted to do it, saw things a bit differently. "I remember how cool it felt to be reading poetry in this freezing place. And I was like, 'Man, I've arrived.' If you want to read poetry on a Sunday afternoon in the freezing cold, then you're really committed to poetry."

Everyone agrees, however, that No Rio was never a physically comfortable space.

"It was so cold in the winter," Mike recalled. "There was no heating in the basement."

When we moved the shows downstairs, there was all this rubble and the band would set up in the middle," Esneider recalled.

"The shows we had at first were only in the front half which was really tiny because the back half was still full of crap," Chris Boarts agreed. "I remember standing smashed back against the door and everyone was smashing into me and I thought, 'This really sucks. I'm never coming back ever, ever again.'" Chris nonetheless kept volunteering at the hardcore shows—and even began curating the occasional Punk Art Show—until 1997.

"There was a room at the back of the basement," Mike explained after hearing Chris's anecdote. "If I remember correctly, to build the stage, they had to tear down the room. So the band had to set up in the middle of the floor."

He remembered the basement floor as a hazard. "Sam from Born Against fell and really hurt himself on something sticking out from the floor in the basement. People were always tripping on stuff down there."

He and a friend attempted to fix the floor. "We got some planks of wood and were hammering here and there and probably made more of a mess," he recalled. "Luckily, we stopped pretty soon." Fifteen years later, he still remembers the Purple Institution specifically because they fixed the floor for their basement exhibition. "We closed it off [during the matinees] but a couple of times people got through and a couple of pieces got vandalized but knowing the New York hardcore scene, it wasn't as bad as it could have been."

Margaret remembered a bench that was more like a seesaw. If one person sat on one end, the other would rise. Conversely, if two people were sitting on opposite ends and one got up, the other would fall off. "We did that to Orion once," she remembered.

Eak remembers the hole in the gallery wall: "There was a poetry reading and it was February and there was a hole in the wall and there was a plastic bag covering the hole and the wind was coming in and it was really intense."

Despite these conditions, people stayed, sometimes for years: "[Leaving ABC] was hard to do. Half the reason why I kept coming back to New York City even after I had tried to leave was because I was still so involved and attached to ABC," said Chris.

"That was your home and you were able to have shows there," recalled Mel. "I grew up in New Jersey and I felt like I had a home in New York."

"From '89 to '92, my entire life revolved around ABC No Rio," recalled Eak. "No Rio was where we became artists in New York. We were doing so much art—readings, bands, shows, painting on the walls." In 1993, Eak went on to become Eak the Geek at Coney Island's famous Sideshows by the Seashore, performing 50 shows a week during the busy summer season. He turned the reading series over to JD Rage, who had first come to No Rio in the early '80s as a musician and stayed on as a poet. JD and her fellow writer Jan Schmidt started the literary magazine *Curare* which came out of both ABC No Rio and the never-published *Vital Pulse*.

Shortly after Fly moved to Gargoyle Mechanique, both Steven and Lou Acierno resigned as No Rio's paid directors and, with Fly, Sheila Smith and others, went on the Magnified Section Tour through the Midwest.

In 1992, three years after Mike Bullshit began the hardcore matinees at ABC, Freddy Alva, Charles Maggio, Sam McPheeters from Born Against and a kid named Dave Stein started Reconstruction Records on East 6th Street. "It was like ABC No Rio six or seven days a week," recalled Charles, who also credits ABC for the creation of the record label Gern Blandsten that same year. "The record label came out of ABC No Rio. The first five releases were from ABC No Rio."

"A lot of people involved with ABC No Rio also volunteered there," Freddy recalled. "We closed down whenever ABC had a show. No one wanted to work then." Freddy devoted more of his time to the record store and less to ABC's matinees. "The last project I was gonna do was an ABC compilation called 'Fuck Rock!' It was a ten-inch with Go!, Huasipungo, Citizens Arrest, Animal Crackers—all the ABC bands. It was gonna come with a booklet and all these photos by Chris Boarts. But it became this monumental project and never happened."

For some volunteers, their interests changed and the community they had found at ABC either wasn't the same or wasn't enough. When Mel got involved with Riot Grrrl, she felt that some of the guys at ABC were more than unsupportive. "They dissed Riot Grrrls," she recalled. "The whole thing about Riot Grrrl was really upsetting. And I came out—I broke up with my boyfriend and he and I were really involved in the scene. And my interests just changed. The bands you loved to see just changed and you didn't love seeing them as much. I got more involved with Riot Grrrl and they weren't really playing ABC No Rio. They were playing the Gas Station, Brownie's, other venues." Before she stopped volunteering, Tribe 8 played at ABC. "I played tuba for Double Zero which opened up for them. Here I was at ABC No Rio and part of this whole other scene—lesbian rockers from San Francisco playing with their shirts off!"

For Akiko too, ABC eventually stopped holding so much appeal. "Being at ABC was a part of my being, but not the whole of myself," she recalled. "I got busy with other aspects of my life. Also after starting my own band [the Plungers], my musical taste shifted away from hardcore."

Some people stayed. Dave Powell began volunteering and, along with Esneider, eventually took over booking the matinees from Neil.

New volunteers started coming around and helping out—branching out from hardcore and punk rock to political film screenings, Food Not Bombs and kids' art classes. Others came and turned the abandoned floors upstairs into squatted living spaces. And some who had left—like Steven and Fly and Margaret—came back years later to fight the City and stop the eviction.

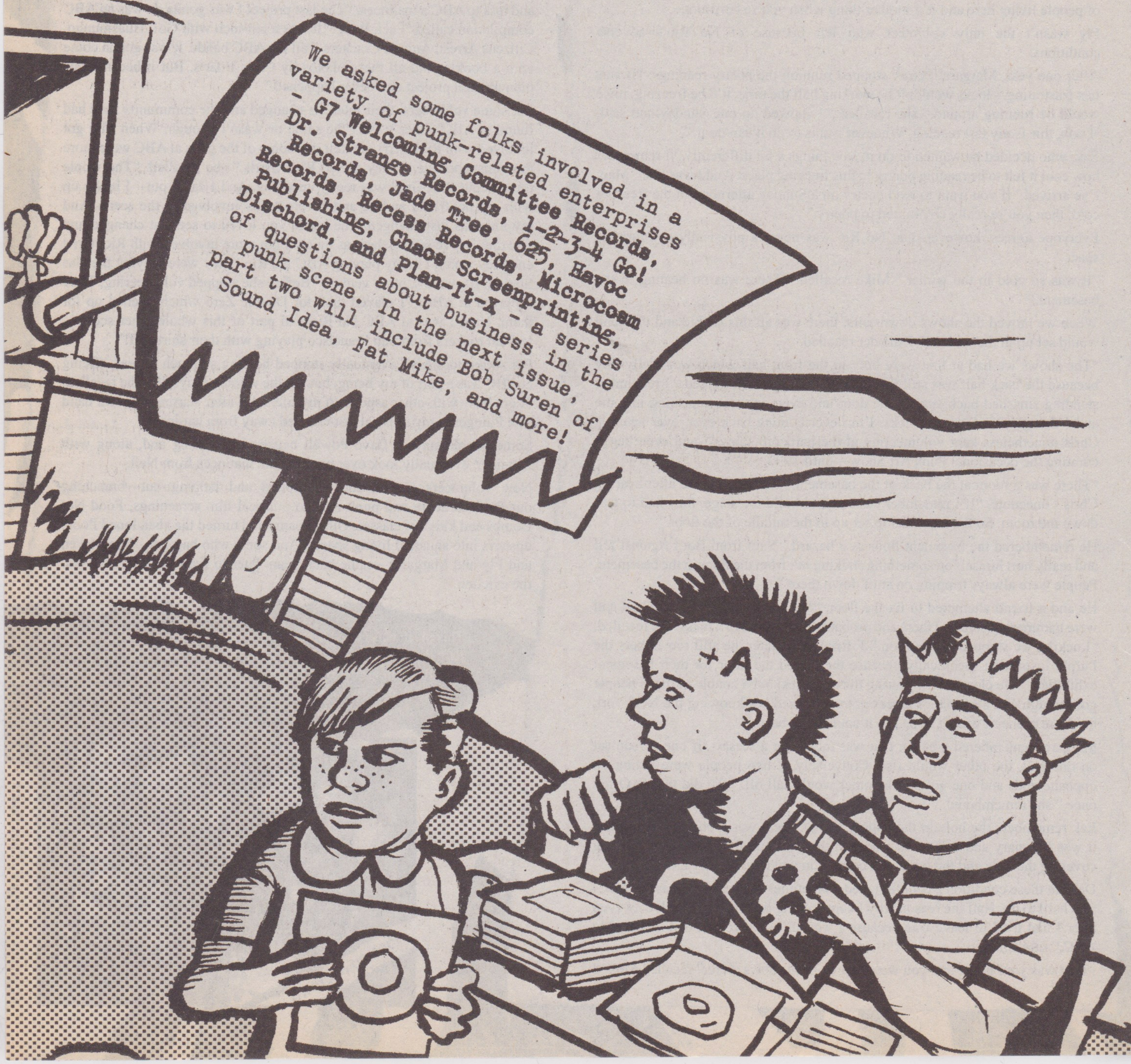
This piece was culled from a zine called Enter the Nineties ABC No Rio: Poets, Punks, & Politics, which you can still order from Black Star Publishing, PO Box 20948, New York, NY 10009. Also, please check out www.abcnorio.org to check out what's happening these days at ABC.

Picasso & crowd

All photos this page by Chris Boarts

IS BUSINESS KILLING PUNK ROCK?

PART ONE



Derek • G7 Welcoming Committee Records

What are your core business ethics?
I suppose to be fair, and pursue the propagation of good music and important ideas, with little…well, *no* regard to profit.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
It means operating without outside ownership by major corporations or controlling interests. It means not being beholden to commercial interests like industry sponsors and major labels. And to us, it means putting the art and idea first, instead of hawking your wares like an annoying, shit-mouthed salesman. Being truly independent is important because, as a strange man once said, "the more dependent music gets, the more it sucks shit all over."

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
Yes, major labels in all of their incarnations should be avoided wherever possible. As the bigger indies set the bar higher and higher, and chain-store sales become increasingly the driving force behind indie labels, everyone thinks they have no choice but to look for a deal with a major-owned distributor. (We've been distributed through Caroline in the past. I feel dirty.)

Fuck this emphasis on chain stores and dealing with major distributors. This is partly why "punk" and "independent" have lost their meaning.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
No, and no. Well, I guess if you could conclusively show that the money you make for that multinational corporation is outweighed by the positive effects the increased exposure of your music to the world will have on its inhabitants. That's a balance sheet I'd like to see.

> "We should, without a doubt, worry about big business and the effect it has on punk. Their influence won't come overnight but in small doses And that's the worst type. It creeps up on you before you even know it."
> -Doc / Dr. Strange Records

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Most bigger indie labels are just entrepreneurs aspiring to have a hot act to promote so they can go to schlocky industry conferences and hob-nob with stylish dorks. They like the idea of "being their own boss" and living the life. Peripherally, they may also like music. But they are actually killing it by promoting it and treating it like a disposable widget. Oh well.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Well, we can stop dealing with big business. For a start.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining independent in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Yes, absolutely.

Why don't punks have a problem with (Fox/Rupert Murdoch's) MySpace.com? Is there an alternative?
Because punks are attention-starved dorks who feel validated by how many other knobs click a link to magically be their "friend." It's so idiotic I can't even begin to believe it. MySpace serves 12% of all ads on the Internet, and "punk" bands are sending people to this site owned by Fox. Lunacy!

Alternatives? Well, there is this new thing you can get now, I think it's called a "web site." It's kinda cutting edge and inaccessible, but I think in the coming months it will become easier to get, and hundreds of available programs will emerge making it easy for anyone to make their own website and get it hosted cheaply without having to serve advertising and put ad clicks in the pockets of right-wing media conglomerates.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
When I was 15 I wrote a letter to Kent McClard (Ebullition) lambasting him for making money off of punk (reportedly $2000 that year), and I asserted that it would be more ethical for him to go on welfare. Now he writes dissertations on why we should kill all housecats. Coincidence?

G7 Welcoming Committee Records / PO Box 27006, C-360 Main Street / Winnipeg, MB R3C 4T3 / Canada

www.g7welcomingcommittee.com

Doc • Dr. Strange Records

What are your core business ethics?
Pretty simple, actually: Treat others the way you would want to be treated.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
It means a lot. Not having to answer to others. Being able to do what *you* want to do and not be a part of the "game" the big stores and labels play. I make a living *from* punk rock. They make theirs *off* of punk rock. That's a huge difference. Punk rock, to me, is still a movement. The music is secondary. It's important to remain "independent" so I can sleep at night.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
To me the fact that I am selling more than just music. It's about having a positive influence on people's lives and trying as best as possible to make the world (or my part of it) a little better.

Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
No, I don't think so. Ask ten people and you'll get ten different answers. And that's one of the great things about punk and one of the reason punk is still around after nearly 30 years. It's always evolving. I think at least one thing that can be agreed on, ethically, on what punk does is to have a positive change on society. Your idea of "positive" may be very different from mine, but as long as the desire is there we have hope.

What is DIY?
Staying true to yourself and not selling out for "greed." Whether it's greed for fame, power, money, whatever.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
In a "perfect world" I'd say better not to deal with them. But the truth is, at times, you have to. I want to carry some bands—Ramones, Rezillos, Stiff Little Fingers, X, etc.—in my record store and I have no choice but to deal with the "enemy." It's just a fact of trying to stay in business.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
I don't think they can really call themselves a "punk" band after signing with a major. At least not nowadays, that is. Maybe in the late '70s; but I just think it's pretty hypocritical. I'm not saying that bands that do sign suck or are evil people, but I think when they sign to a major they've started a walk down a wrongful path.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
We, as a society, can do everything. The power is in our hands *not* theirs. It's just a matter of pulling together and agreeing that this is

"wrong." The problem is that many will say one thing but do another. We should, without a doubt, worry about big business and the effect it has on punk. Their influence won't come overnight but in small doses And that's the worst type. It creeps up on you before you even know it.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Only if that conflicts with your ethics or beliefs. Hell, I love Coke and will never stop drinking it. Do I feel bad about that? No way!

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
Ultimately, yes it is. Do I, as a store, do it? Yes I do.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
Even when you pay it has a *huge* affect on the mom and pop stores. I have seen in the past 17 years of doing Dr. Strange a big change in sales due to downloading and CD burning. Many stores will soon go out of business. It is very worrisome to many—especially if stores don't also do a website. Those are the ones in trouble.

Why don't punks have a problem with (Rupert Murdoch's) MySpace.com? Is there an alternative?
I've never even gone to MySpace but I think they (kids) don't think anything is wrong with it because everyone does it. In their minds it must be okay. And in reality, isn't it?

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
As long as you do it in the right way—treat others with respect. Then by all means of course it is. Why should a person be penalized for running a successful business or band? To me punk rock is all about being successful. It isn't "cool" to be poor and live on the streets.

Dr. Strange Records / PO Box 1058 / Alta Loma, CA 91701 / USA / www.drstrange.com

> "Those of us who consider ourselves punk aren't any better or worse than the rest of humanity...we're just loosely bound together under the same flag and we tend to like skulls more."
>
> -Steve / 1-2-3-4 Go! Records

Steve • 1-2-3-4 Go! Records

What are your core business ethics?
1) Never release records you don't like based on the fact that they will sell well if you do. I've been faced with this a few times. If I liked shitty NOFX rip off style punk I would probably have more money and a more famous label. I just can't do it though. Maybe that makes me a poor businessman but I couldn't lie to people and say it was a great record if inside I was thinking it was the hugest piece of shit.
2) Be fair to the people you work with and yourself.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
To me being "independent" means not having to answer to anyone except yourself. You don't have to turn in profit reports to a higher up to see if you have a job next week. You live and die by your decisions alone. I think it's important in a lot of cases because it keeps the art free to be what it will be. You make the art you want to because it pleases you. You ask the bands you like to do records with you because you love their music. The minute you have to think about what the person with the money will think if this doesn't sell x amount of copies you dilute yourself. You're not going to have as much capital as you would if you signed a P&D deal with a major label, or what have you, but you'll be doing exactly what you want to do. On the other hand, as unlikely as it is, if someone gave me a million dollars and said, "I don't care what you do or how well it does—here's a contract that says you don't have to pay me back," I'd take it. I guess those are my stipulations for a viable "sellout" scenario...ha ha.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
I don't think a "punk" business is too different than any other business except we're all degenerates of one fashion or another buying, selling, and trading with each other...and the stuff is cooler. People like to think a punk business will be fairer to its employees and its customers, but there's hundreds of examples of that not being true, either through poor business practices or the owner/operators being pricks. Those of us who consider ourselves punk aren't any better or worse than the rest of humanity...we're just loosely bound together under the same flag and we tend to like skulls more.

Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
Well, until we establish a punk business owners association and draft a uniform code of ethics there's always going to be differences of opinion on what is ethical and what is not. In general I think most people running labels agree that you don't fuck over your bands and people in bands don't fuck over their labels. Even that is debatable for some people and everything else is totally up in the air.

What is DIY?
Do It Yourself, to most people. Don't Involve Yourself to others...and to an even smaller degree it means the airport code for Diyarbakir, Turkey.

Some people out there think that DIY (the Do It Yourself definition) is more of a communal thing. Like it's DIY to buy something from someone who is also in the DIY community...even though you didn't do anything but buy something like any other consumer. It's also still DIY if you're a band on what they term a DIY label. But it's the label that pays for and distributes the record. But that's still DIY to them. However, if that same band then goes to a larger label they don't consider part of the DIY community and that label pays for the record to be made and distributed just like the other label did, it is now not DIY. I think that's a bunch of hooey. Do It Yourself means exactly what it says: you do it for yourself. You record the record, you pay to put it out, and you distribute it. You get another party or business involved then it's not really DIY anymore. It's a cooperative effort, which I think is just as valid if not better. Who wants to be the lone wolf on everything? The band makes music, the label makes that music available and all is right in the world to me.

Is "doing it yourself" only for those who can afford it?
You can only do what you can do with what you have. If you really want to do something but you need the help or capital of someone else and it doesn't compromise what you're trying to accomplish, I say don't restrict yourself.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
I'm of the opinion that if for some reason one of those cats wants to pick up some of my records that's fine by me. Their money spends just as well as anyone else's. I'm not going to cut my own throat to offer them price breaks to get in to Best Buy or what have you...but I will use their money to put out more records if it comes to me on my terms.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
Depends. If you play the style of music that falls under the big

old "punk sound" umbrella you're still a punk band no matter where you go. Are they going to be accepted by a lot of people who hold "punk" as more than just a style of music? I suppose not. I think it's important to define the two separate sides of the punk style of music and the punk style of life. Both are hugely debatable as far as their boundaries go. Some people think the punk lifestyle is all about rules of what to do and what not to do. On the other hand, there are people who think punk means no rules or boundaries at all. This here is the endless punk debate that I don't think we'll ever come to an agreement on. We're trying to decide where the boundaries are and half of us see wide-open sky and the other half see clearly defined walls and a roof.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Yes, it is just as bad. Bad people are bad no matter what sort of business model they're operating under. I don't know if the major vs. indie debate is moot or not. I know that there needs to be independent businesses to keep things from stagnating, period. No matter how expansive they are, the major corporations aren't picking up every piece of music that deserves to be heard. For some reason they don't seem interested in putting out an amazing 7" that sells 500 copies.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Do not even worry about big business and/or taking "punk" out of their hands. "Punk" is intangible. It's not something anyone can clearly define or hold. Keep creating on your terms and don't concentrate on what Big Business is co-opting this week.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Do what you think is reasonable. I say, don't suffer needlessly though because you think getting what you need wouldn't be DIY.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
I think straight-up bootlegging someone's record is very wrong. You're directly interfering with their livelihood and art. Live recordings that the band never intends on using…passable, I suppose. Sort of flattering, really—people are so rabid for your music they'll buy poorly recorded live concerts to get more if they have to. Sometimes it prompts the bands to release superior sounding versions, which is cool.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3's of independent punk bands without paying?
Individual songs to show someone how rad a band is? Absolutely okay. Ripping a whole album you got a promo of and putting it on the Internet before it comes out on a small label…not okay at all. Small labels and bands make little if any money as it is. Putting out their hard work for free before they've even had a chance to break even is shitty. A lot of kids think that bands and labels are inherently rolling in money so if a few hundred people get the record for free it's no big deal…but for small bands or labels a few hundred copies could be half of their total sales right off the top.

Why don't punks have a problem with (Fox/Rupert Murdoch's) MySpace.com? Is there an alternative?
There are alternatives all over the place; www.punkrock.org is one of many. However, to me, using a free service that is owned by a company that falls under Rupert Murdoch's ownership isn't really an issue. Is it weird? I guess so a little to some people. But it's MySpace. It's a weird place where people can hear your music conveniently and you can keep track of friends on the Internet. If I want to see *The Simpsons* or *Family Guy* I have to watch Fox, and I'll be damned if I'm going to stop doing that because some Australian douche owns the network. It's kind of funny really—Fox is one of the trashiest networks on non-pay TV and Fox News is one of the most conservative networks on Cable. Dude has got people at both ends.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
If you can make a living doing what you want, and what you want is a punk-related business, then more power to you. I'd rather someone make money doing what they love than work some shitty job to survive wasting time instead of creating something or enjoying themselves.

S. Stevenson / 2928 Telegraph Ave #3 / Oakland, CA 94609 / USA / www.1234gorecords.com

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JADE TREE

Darren Walters • Jade Tree

What are your core business ethics?
To release quality records (artistically and musically) while properly compensating the artist and pleasing fans. Jade Tree's deals are mostly a 50/50 net profit split and I believe this is a fair way to run a label. The artist has a large say in how their music is released, used commercially (video games, skate videos, etc.) and in the overall aesthetic of their release. Jade Tree attempts to work with as many "indie" businesses as possible (distributors, stores, PR—whatever) in the process of releasing a record, though not exclusively as that is rather impossible for a label the size of Jade Tree.

"The only way to run a business of any kind is to be fair and equitable and to ensure that the business is 100% on the up-and-up. Shady practices such as not sending out royalty statements or sales numbers, or being a general mess is just not acceptable-no matter whether the label is punk or not."
–Darren Walters / Jade Tree

What does it mean to be independent?
Independent to me is not one thing or another, but more a general state of mind and approach to life. Much like how I look at the term "punk." That being said, Jade Tree is not owned by anyone but myself and my partner Tim Owen, and Jade Tree receives no money from any other company for any reason. In my mind, this makes Jade Tree 100% independent, although we do use the distributor ADA (owned by Warner) for distribution into the chain store and one-stops as part of our distribution deal with Touch & Go.

Independence is dying, especially in the US. The general public needs to be aware that independent business can not only still exist in this market of big box retailers, but thrive as well.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
Most of the time nothing other than the "punk" spirit and ethics embodied by the owners.

Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
I think not. Especially as it appears that many "punk" businesses survive by being parasites in the scene with people afraid to confront them as such. As a person who owns a label that can be bashed from time to time about our level of "punkness," I find it amusing that Jade Tree has never wronged an artist, yet Jade Tree consistently works with artists who were treated unfairly by "punker" labels than Jade Tree.

The only way to run a business of any kind is to be fair and equitable and to ensure that the business is 100% on the up-and-up. Shady practices such as not sending out royalty statements or sales numbers, or being a general mess is just not acceptable—no matter whether the label is punk or not.

What is DIY?
Nothing other than Do It Yourself! Or more to the point: The business germinates within you and you alone, or with other like-minded people, who build upon the origin of the business and build a self-sustaining business that, while it may rely on others for support (distribution, for instance) is still at its core run by those who originally gave it birth.

Is it wrong to major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, Fontana, etc.?
Jade Tree uses ADA. I have no problem using ADA because no indie was able to get the artists on Jade Tree who are not punk and who want to be in Best Buy, into the chains effectively. This saddens me, but it is a fact. However, as I already mentioned, Jade Tree's deal is with Touch & Go, who is indie and makes sure that all of the indie stores get Jade Tree records. Because Jade Tree sells many more records in indie stores than chains, and because I support other indie businesses, this is very important to me.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
I'll put it this way: I don't know anyone for whom this has worked out for yet. Especially with the power of indie labels these days, I'm not sure that signing to a major makes any sense at all.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Totally moot. There are a hell of a lot of indies that are just as bad, if not worse, than the majors. Indie doesn't mean shit unless it is run in the spirit that I pointed out earlier. It's all about what you do, not how you are labeled.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Is that even possible at this point? A healthy punk underground (I never thought that I would say that) exists in opposition to major indie-label rock disguised as punk, and it does not appear to be diminishing in any way.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
While it is getting much more difficult to live this way outside of major cities, I do think it is important to keep independence as much of a part of one's life as possible. As a label owner, I look at the local bookstore or record store as kindred spirits. Might I buy a coffee from a Starbucks while driving on the New Jersey Turnpike? Yes, but at home I buy my coffee from my local indie spot.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
Um, depends. I generally say it is OK for out-of-print or expensive collector's records. It is OK with live records too. I also think it is cooler to send the artist a few copies, as not getting any copies pisses off the artist more than anything. Oh yeah, bootlegging brand new material is scummy.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
To a degree. I try not to make a stink about downloading in the hopes that fans will ultimately help support independent artists and business all around.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Yes. I always try and keep this in mind: You don't have to fuck people over to survive. If you keep that in mind and you and other punks can make a living, I see absolutely no problem with this. The stigma attached to making a living off of something that you love is really sort of silly. Especially if you can do what you love, do it well, and avoid working in the "real world."

Jade Tree / 2310 Kennwynn Rd. / Wilmington, DE 19810 / www.jadetree.com

Max • 625™

What are your core business ethics?
Release what I like, focus on new bands from areas that fall outside of the "core" scenes of the US and Europe, keep my prices as low as possible, and don't sweat losing thousands of dollars every year. Since I do have a lot of numbers to crunch come tax time, I have a CPA…and every time I go see him he says the same thing: "Why don't you raise your prices, or at least release popular music?" He just doesn't get it.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
There is no "independence" if you really look at it—you still have to utilize CD plants and vinyl plants that the same corporate rockers are using. Even the punk "middle men" brokers out there still end up going through the corporate plants to press things. There's no way around it. The only thing that I see as some sort of alternative (alternative still comfortably within the strictures of running a legit business) is working with Ebullition (great ethics) and punk presses like Iconography in Oakland and Imprint in Florida. There have always been DIY shirt dudes, but the process of making and distributing a record has been more difficult. Now if some punks just went in on a press and learned the craft of vinyl pressing…

> "I have a CPA…and every time I go see him he says the same thing: "Why don't you raise your prices, or at least release popular music?" He just doesn't get it."
> -Max / 625

From the business side of things, independence for me is the freedom to lose my own money on releasing bands that I like and think deserve to get some vinyl out there. If I had to pay rent from the label, or had others to answer to, my label would have folded years ago. I have consistently put in my own money to keep the label going.

What makes a punk business different than any other business? Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are? What is DIY?
We can speak of the ethics, but no matter what, whether you are releasing records or freight hopping and spare changing, you are *within* a system whether you like or not. There is no such thing as alterity when it comes to capitalism. DIY is merely a mode within capitalism, same with coops and collectives. I'm all for DIY, co-ops and collectives, but the idea is to move pass all of this instead of confine ourselves within a niche we have carved out of capitalism.

I think that this term "DIY" is merely a discursive creation that we can comfortably insert into our ads. I mean, yes, you can screen your own shirts, you can release your own records, record your own music. But it is still within the confines of a social formation whose sole guideline is that everything is a commodity. But then again, you can spot a dickhead label a mile away, from the low-level rip-offs, to the "underground" labels that act like metal labels, etc. The key is not to be a dickhead, and make sure you are not ripping anyone off, especially those who are buying your stuff.

Is "doing it yourself" only for those who can afford it?
Of course. There are different modes of expression through music in other societies, but punk appears where the middle-class kids have too much time (and money) on their hands. This is not to level DIY and stadium-rock as the same thing. If there is a will, there is a way, and one of the most inspiring things is to see a band (that is not so good), get together with a bunch of other people/bands, get a van going, and hit the road with only

cassettes to sell. Again though, you need a certain amount of space to do that, and I don't think kids working in agriculture in the poorer parts of the world are too concerned with ordering 625 records and playing blast beats.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana.?
Fucking burn 'em all down. It's not the solution, but hell, at least it's a start.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
Fuck no. They should be blacklisted...just for the shear stupidity of it all. During the early '90s I heard *all* the excuses for signing to a major/semi-major. Can someone please tell me of one instance when that worked out the way the band had envisioned? Fuck, man, if I hear that old Rage Against The Machine line again—you know: "This way our message gets out to those who normally who wouldn't have heard it"—I'm gonna puke. Great, American Apparel sells Che shirts now; I'm sure the person who bought it is inculcated with the revolutionary spirit now.

Overall, I think those bands can do whatever they want, but they should not be allowed to play Gilman or other collective-effort venues like that. There are plenty of rock clubs to cater to that scene; we should stick with those who stick by us. I mean, I loved Slayer back in the day, it didn't mean that I think they should have played Gilman.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major?
Sure. It's not just that we are still slinging commodities like every other business, but that for some, the whole "business" mentality of ceaseless growth, endless competition, etc., gets imparted to the "DIY" labels. There have been plenty of times that I've seen DIY labels try to "out-bid" other labels for bands and shit. That is lame.

"I don't think there is ever a good reason to sign to a major. Never. Some bands try to say that they want their message to reach more people. But there's not one example of that working. I always say, your message gets lost at the mall."
-Chris / Plan-It-X

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Fuck the bands that work with 'em. Fuck 'em. Don't run their ads, don't carry their music, don't book 'em at our clubs. I mean, "big business" will always draw some fucking moron into its fold; we shouldn't worry about that shit.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
It would be silly not to; music is merely music. In fact, my biggest complaint against "punk" is that all this window dressing of radical politics has actually muted politics. The vegan warriors can dress themselves in the shrouds of the slaughtered, but they can't stand back and take a wider view of their actions. Same goes for crusties. Love that Gloom shirt. How much did eBay get you to bid on it? We need a wider lens instead of getting so clued in on commodities and their auras.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
Perfect question for me (since I've gotten into it over this question many times). Here is my stance...Go ahead and tape the fucking record, and sell it at shows for $2. I don't understand why "DIY" labels start bootlegging classic (and sometimes sketchy) records, and start selling them for $13–$15 a pop?! You don't have any "royalties" to pay out, the layout is almost always shit, so what were your expenses? You just made a cool $10 on each record you pressed. And then you want to hide behind the slogan "but kids want to hear it" kinda shit. I'm waiting for the bootlegger who makes a CD and sells it for $5. Better yet, fucking tape trade, that's what started DIY punk in the first place.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
Sure. Fuck it. That would be the true "DIY" when all labels are cut out from the get-go and everyone just traded music freely (whether on cassette, or MP3). Again, you run into the inherent paradox that to "freely" trade music you need a $1000 computer. Oh, the sorrows of the middle class and their iPods.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Sure, but do it honestly.

Max 625 / 249 Smith St, PMB 106 / Brooklyn, NY 11231 / USA / www.625thrash.com

Felix Havoc
Havoc Records and Distribution

What are your core business ethics?
I strive to remain independent and put artistic integrity ahead of the profit motive. I call the shots and make the decisions regardless of what market forces are coming into play.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
If you are independent your label doesn't take orders or become influenced by a distributor or parent company. A lot of labels can get pressured to put out releases that are "more commercial" or get pressured to produce a new release every 90 days or something. I pick the bands I want to work with based on the music, their message and the fact that I think they are dedicated and legit people. I release it when I feel it's ready and sell it at a price I determine. I control the quality, the price, and promotion of the release. I take all the risks and suffer all the consequences, good or bad. I wouldn't operate a business on any other terms. It's less a question of would I rather do it this way, because I'd never be able to do it another way.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
In theory, an emphasis on artistic integrity over commercial appeal.

Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
No. There used to be some standards of conduct in Tim Yo's day. But the DIY movement lost a lot of its leadership with his passing. Tim Yo was a major brake on the commercialization of punk. He commanded respect and would call bullshit where he saw it. Kent at Ebullition is another major brake on these forces. If he taps out, all bets are off. Hardcore punk is already about ten times more commercialized that I ever thought it could be.

What is DIY?
I'd like to think that doing it yourself means that you have total artistic freedom to create something that is superior to what the "marketplace" for entertainment can offer. Unburdened by commercial concerns you create pure art for the ages rather than just an entertainment commodity. "if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself." That said, a lot of what's labeled "DIY" is just some half-assed low quality trifle that no label in their right mind would release. No quality control, no standards. DIY should be rising to the challenge to be better than the mainstream, not worse.

Is "doing it yourself" only for those who can afford it? (i.e., What if you can't afford to buy your own tour van, have your band recorded, release your own records, etc.?)
While having financial resources definitely gives some bands/labels a leg up, I'd have to say that where there's a will, there's a way. A band

of total outsiders can come from out of nowhere to shake the foundations of the music scene with nothing but their wits and some borrowed amps and pawn shop guitars. If it's legit and good, people will notice and pieces will fall into place. On the other hand, a lot of talentless hacks with pro gear and attitude have flooded the market with infantile twaddle in recent years, making it harder to discern the signal from the noise. This is one area where I wish market forces actually acted with more rigor in the music scene, to weed out the hacks and elevate the bands with merit. But rich kids can subsidize a worthless band indefinitely and keep them in the ring long after they should have thrown in the towel.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
I wouldn't deal with a major label. I like some major label artists like Judas Priest and AC/DC but they belong to a different era of music. I don't think I'd work with a major label owned distributor either. This is hardly an issue with me though, as the kind of bands I release don't have much commercial appeal. I personally try to keep as much of my own money out of corporate America as possible. I try to support local businesses, co-ops, etc. There's a limit to how far you can go with this of course, but every dollar you spend is a "vote" for one system or the other. That said, in the modern era it's de riguer for DIY labels to use credit cards, PayPal, MySpace, etc., all manifestations of corporate culture I'd rather do without. You have to compromise at each step, but how far you go in compromising your ethics is the test.

"These days, the industry is so bankrupt for innovation that majors will sign just about any band with 5,000 MySpace friends, and indies are all looking to become the next majors."

—Felix Havoc

Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
I don't think there's much any excuse to sign to a major. Most bands who sign to majors or big independents will tell you they got burned by the fine print in their contract. Has any hardcore band been successful on a major label? Hüsker Dü? Sick Of It All? Most bands are better off in the underground regardless. But either way, stepping into that world means you've ceased to be an artist and just become a content provider. You are just giving up your creative control in order to produce entertainment commodity, usually for the lowest common denominator. The one universality of major label music in the past 15 or 20 years is its utter banality. Even the last few Judas Priest and AC/DC records weren't that hot.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
These days, the industry is so bankrupt for innovation that majors will sign just about any band with 5,000 MySpace friends, and indies are all looking to become the next majors. And of course there's the mid-level "big independent" labels that might as well be majors. I don't see much difference. Once you cross a certain point all the music starts to suck and the business ethics are deplorable. If I see a band go to a major, usually they change their look and sound at the same time. And usually the music starts to suck worse and worse.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Yes. You should support good independent labels that put out quality music at a fair price. Just like you should support local small businesses instead of giant corporations in your community. There would be no bands for major labels to sign if the underground refused their enticements. Alternately you could make music so harsh and intense it had no commercial appeal.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Absolutely, as I said above, each dollar you spend is a vote for one economic system or another. I think our economy is poised on the verge of a major realignment due to an energy crisis like the 1973 oil shock, but worse. I foresee rapidly rising prices for oil, natural gas, and fossil fuel-derived products. A falling dollar, rising inflation and falling economic growth as well as a burst of the housing bubble and contraction of financial markets. In such a climate, globalization will start to flow backwards. Local businesses and community connections will become more and more important. It's time to start supporting these institutions and helping them grow now. Co-ops, local small businesses, and farmers markets are what we need to be building up, not the Wal-Marts and Best Buys of the world.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
This is a very good question I addressed in a column some time ago. My answer is yes, and no. There are different kinds of bootlegs made for different motivations. Some bootlegs are even tacitly supported by bands who got ripped off by labels back in the day and don't even own the rights to their own music. While on the other hand, some bootlegs are poor quality, overpriced trash that rip off dedicated bands who are still active in the scene. I think the best bootlegs are stuff like Killed By Death and Bloodstains comps that exposed a new generation to otherwise lost punk music, and the worst are the ones that guy in the former Yugoslavia does: high price, low quality, and ripping off bands/people still active in DIY hardcore. Anyone who runs a store or label will tell you that bootlegs are one of the only things that will sell consistently. It amazes a lot of people that something like Gauze or Bastard records that sell for hundreds on eBay are not reissued and the bootlegs sell as fast as they hit the shelves. I would like to see more classic material reissued at higher levels of quality with the support of the bands to help squelch the demand for bootlegs. I especially want NOTA, Anti-Cimex and the Shitlickers to let me reissue their material before it gets bootlegged again.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
I say go for it. It gets the music out there cheaply and efficiently then why not. Collectors will always value vinyl. CD is a rather trashy format from the start. I'd be happy to see CD fade away and just do digital/vinyl and shirts.

Why don't punks have a problem with (Fox/Rupert Murdoch's) MySpace.com?
I'm rather conflicted about MySpace. I don't use it myself, and I personally suspect it's actually an enormous engine for harvesting personal information for marketing and other sinister purposes. But it does seem to be quite popular in the punk scene and offers a place to network and host MP3s. Rupert Murdock is a grade-A right-wing prick though. I was fascinated to read about his reasons for buying MySpace. People who are interested should research it. He said the most popular discussion groups on MySpace were for Fox-produced TV shows—The Simpsons and such. That shows you how extensively the corporate world has penetrated punk subculture. I mean, who gives a fuck about Fox TV shows when you can listen to hardcore punk?

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Tim Yo always said that if you started making a living off punk it would start to compromise your judgement and you'd make decisions based on purely commercial concerns rather than artistic concerns. While I think he was right on many accounts, I think he overlooked that there are people of high principles in the punk scene who can run a DIY punk business and stay very committed to its ethics, most notably Kent and Lisa at Ebullition and Bob Suren at Sound Idea. Dischord, No Idea, and other labels/distros have shown that it's possible to be very independent, fair minded, and honest and still make a living off the music. I think over the long haul "old fashioned" principles of doing business will triumph in America. We live in an era of low standards, everyone wants some thing for nothing and the level of quality around us is very low. But if you are honest, have high standards, treat your customers and associates fairly, and consistently deliver a quality product at a fair price you will succeed in the long run. You probably won't get rich, but you will get return customers and have a greater level of satisfaction.

On the other extremes there are blatant rip off labels like Lost and Found who just took the money and ran from the punk scene. And at the opposite end, DIY extremists who go out of their way to lose money on everything and usually burn out and go under ripping off just as many people because they can't make ends meet.

Havoc Records / PO Box 8585 / Minneapolis, MN 55408 / USA / www.havocrex.com

Todd Congelliere • Recess Records

What are your core business ethics?
Make stuff affordable without compromising on packaging. Don't fuck people over.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
It means you can put a grown adult's finger about to touch a baby's wiener on your record cover if you want to. Why you would wanna do that is none of their business. It's important to be independent in all departments of life cos why waste time waiting on someone else to make you happy?

What is DIY?
It stands for Doing It Yourself. There's a DIY channel where they have shows on how to fix your house, build a swing set, change your oil and build a tree house all on your own.

Somewhere along the line someone grabbed that acronym and made it a label for a certain sound of music. If a label buys your band a van than your not DIY. That doesn't mean that you can't be a great important punk band. It just means that you didn't do it yourself. I hate to be mathematical about it. I've heard people say when they are about to start a band, "I want it to sound like DIY punk." It's not a sound to me. You can sound like the Cranberries and still be DIY, but what if you sounded like the Cranberries and Jade Tree put it out?

> "(Being independent) means you can put a grown adult's finger about to touch a baby's wiener on your record cover if you want to. Why you would wanna do that is none of their business."
>
> -Todd Recess

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels?
To me it's not wrong to buy any music or art from anyone. Life is too short to miss out on stuff that's really good only cos grubby hands got on it. The Clash… I was gonna throw in loads of examples but I'm cool with just the Clash. When I was 12 I went into a chain store to find a Stiff Little Fingers record and I was directed to a punk record store called Peanuts in Lomita. I freaked out in the bestest way ever from then on. I wish I had an in-the-know sibling that showed me the ropes instead but that's the way it happened and I am forever grateful!

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
If they still think they are then they are a punk band. Punk, to me (!), is more about thought than anything. Whatever you think you are than you must be.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major?
They are worse. I base this opinion solely on the Victory Records ads I've seen.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Why worry? Independents have taken so much of their business away in the recent years, and it was done outta love and spirit as opposed to greed. 7 Seconds should be happy to know that we have actually succeeded where the hippies failed! We should worry about the band Big Business cos they are gonna kill the shit outta us!

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
I dunno about being adamant about it, but at least recognize that it doesn't end with your band. Like, should I go to Enchilada House or Taco Bell? Oh wait! Is that a terrible example cos Enchilada House is cheaper and better? No, it's a perfect example!

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
I heard this one story where Don Bolles of the Germs walked into this record store in LA about 18 years ago, grabbed all the Germs bootlegs and walked out of the store yelling, "I believe these belong to me!" to the owner. Now I dunno if that's a myth or what, but when I heard it the first thing I said was, *"Fuck yes!!"* I didn't even come close to recognizing the irony of it all due to the fact that I probably bought most of those bootlegs!

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
Yes, it is. Music should be free. *But,* people need to be wise about it and understand that there needs to be a support system behind every band/label that you love or they wont be able to make anymore music for them. Just like the mainstream, the independent scene has a shitload of douchebags who think they are getting away with something if they download stuff and sneak into shows.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Not only is it okay, it should be celebrated if you are making a living with something you love doing. Sincere people who live off their band, label, etc., are living outside of society's pliers and should be an example. Well, except for Victory Records.

Recess / PO Box 1666 / San Pedro, CA 90733-1666 / www.recessrecords.com

Joe Biel • Microcosm Publishing

What are your core business ethics?
As myself, the individual:

1) Bicycle, don't drive when possible.

2) Reinvest money locally or in things we believe in.

3) Maintain the economics of our cash flow in such a way that we pay the smallest people first and the biggest people last.

4) Don't deal with jerks (when possible)

5) Control the locus of our own distribution as much as possible.

6) Maintain the majority of our work in-house, particularly things that represent our identity, like design and editing.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
It means that you control elements of your artwork that are important to you. You have a say in how you are represented in the world. I've seen numerous people's work torn apart, misrepresented, and butchered by majors. I've had friends write articles for magazines that did not use a single word from the submitted work and still put the original author's name on it. I've met numerous folks whose books were published by majors and then remaindered within months, or worse yet, had different content or cover artwork or visual components than discussed. Authors who were treated like they didn't know what was best for them or what they wanted. There are examples of people who make videos who don't even know their work is for sale on DVD until they stumble across a copy of it somewhere. These things do not happen when you have the kind of direct communication and understanding present with a successful, small, indie publisher. Jawbreaker sold more records on a bedroom-based indie than on Geffen. What does that tell you (content of the records aside)?

What is DIY?
Owning the channels through which your artwork is broadcast. Controlling the avenues that dictate your artwork's content and the way it is shown to the world. e.g., Borders Books places heavy control on which books they see fit to distribute based on content, artwork, and subject matter. This creates censorship in the sense that many books are never published as they would not be carried at such

a principle marketplace. This is the antithesis of DIY.

Is "doing it yourself" only for those who can afford it? (i.e., What if you can't afford to buy your own tour van, have your band recorded, release your own records, etc.?)
Hell no. We raised money to publish books by distributing zines and books for six years. We reinvested money we made to publish our first books and then continued to do so. It's not like the only way to fundraise is to have a big daddy. There are always better alternatives. Don't borrow from banks either.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major?
I find it more deplorable when a major tries to behave like an indie…

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business?
Set a better precedent. Show a good example of doing it independently. Show ways that a project can be sustainable when it's self-released and sell a reasonable amount. In many cases, people go to major corporations in the hopes of selling more or because indies don't pay royalties on schedule (or at all) and they need something reliable. In that sense, the best response is to self-publish your thing and treat everyone fairly along the way.

"I hate that shit. Even pre-Fox I was leery enough that people would choose (MySpace) as a legitimate forum of communication! The alternative is talking to human beings." -Joe Biel / Microcosm Publishing

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Absolutely. There is no "outside of punk rock." If you're a punk than you're still a punk when you eat, read, or sleep.

Why don't punks have a problem with (Fox/Rupert Murdoch's) MySpace.com? Is there an alternative?
I hate that shit. Even pre-Fox I was leery enough that people would choose that as a legitimate forum of communication! The alternative is talking to human beings. Sure, I've heard the argument of how great it is for booking tours, but do we really need more plastic relationships in our lives with relative strangers?

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?

I think it is essential if any of us are trying to do this for real, for any extended period of time. Living is relative, of course. Is it living when it's below the poverty line?

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Levi Curtice • Chaos Screenprinting

What are your core business ethics?
I think there is a problem with putting the two words *punk* and *business* together. Punk rock is an anti-authoritarian counter-culture (it is to me, anyway) and business is about making money. I don't have any core business ethics, I have punk rock ethics. I don't call any of the things I do a business, I call them projects. Sometimes I make some money off the project, sometimes I don't. I still work full-time. If I could make a living off what I do that would be great, but punk rock is always first and business second.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
Being independent means I do things the way I want them done, and I don't give a shit about paying taxes or attracting big clients. I don't know that it really matters if you are independent or not. I really think most people use labels like that when they are small and are trying to use it as a marketing tool to attract business. As soon as it is no longer convenient they will discard it.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
I provide services to punks. The difference between me and other printers is that I want to print for punk rockers. I try to keep my prices low as possible, and do the best job I can, with no minimum orders. I try to do things for punk rockers because I love punk rock, not because I love money.

What is DIY?
DIY is about doing it yourself, but there really is no DIY scene or ethic in punk rock anymore. Nobody makes their own shirts, stickers, CDs, records, etc.—they pay someone else to do it. That is not DIY. Often they would rather pay more to a mainstream business than to a small punk rock operation, which is fine if that's what they want to do and what they want to be about. Increasingly I've started to notice an anti-DIY attitude in the underground. Yeah, DIY means it might not look exactly the same as what the mainstream does, but again that is the point. I could write a whole article just on this question alone, but for now I'll move on.

Is "doing it yourself" only for those who can afford it? (i.e., What if you can't afford to buy your own tour van, have your band recorded, release your own records, etc.?)
The United States is a place of excess—beg, borrow, steal what you need, find a way, fuck the way the mainstream does it. If you can't afford it then it is not DIY, that is the whole point. Why do punk bands need to go on tour? Stay home, hang out in your scene and have fun. Fuck tours—that is mainstream bullshit. Fuck records, CDs are 100 times more DIY than records ever were.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels?
I got a better question, what is the difference between most of the bigger indie labels and the majors? Punk rock says fuck authority, fuck the mainstream, fuck my future, I'm going to do what I want and do it my own way and I don't care what happens or what you're gonna do to me. Once you start to move away from that, why does it even matter? It might not happen right away but it will happen slowly: a compromise here, a decision based on money there, and it all slides downhill.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
If a punk band is making money, or the members don't have day jobs, I fail to see how they can still be punk. What do you have to be pissed about? You are living a fantasy life, you have no connection to the despair, anger, loneliness of being young and trapped in a fucked up place with people you hate, who also hate you. Going to high school and getting in fights because you're a freak, or ditching school to go drink with your friends is punk. Signing record deals is not punk. There is way too much importance on bands in punk rock. You're in a band? Great, but so is everyone on my block—who fucking cares?

At the point where you even have the option for someone else to put out your music and make money on it I don't think it really matters anymore. Where is the danger? Where is the chaos? Fine, sign to a major, but I want to see you starting fights with rednecks, inciting riots, and just generally fucking shit up.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Yes it is, there is no difference. They are both turning youthful rebellion into a commodity. Consumerism is the new punk rock.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
If you even have to ask it's way too late. Just the fact that business has an interest in punk means that punk doesn't much matter anymore. Businesses should run when they find out

punk rock is involved; punk should mean you there is no potential for profit. Want to get rid of business? Get rid of the money, they will be more than happy to leave.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Life sucks, not everyone has those options. Sometimes you have to do things that suck in order to survive. The problem is people try to justify it, make an excuse for it, instead of just saying, "Yeah, it sucks. I had to do it, but at least in my free time I can listen to punk." If you have to work at McDonalds, fine, but while you're there steal, break stuff, and make that place unprofitable (with out getting caught).

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
Yes. Look, if you can make a living doing that, I think it's great, you're very lucky. But I (like a lot of people) have to work a shit job for a living, and if I can get something for free then why should I pay for it? You want me to spend my money so you can live the easy life? Good luck with that.

> "I think there is a problem with putting the two words 'punk' and 'business' together. Punk rock is an anti-authoritarian counter-culture and business is about making money."
> *-Levi Curtice / Chaos Screenprinting*

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Yeah, I guess it's alright, but I think there should be a lot of suspicion of people that do. I've seen a lot of talk about how bands aren't making enough money, or shows don't cost enough, etc. (in *MRR*). This is mostly from people who make a living, or at least a substantial sum of money, from punk rock—why else would they be trying to get people to pay more? You're very lucky, now stop being greedy. Just be thankful that you don't have to get up early and work hard all day like a lot of people do.

DISCHORD records

Alec • Dischord Records

What are your core business ethics?
We don't exist in a vacuum nor are we producers simply of plastic or magical money trees. Our ethics revolve around the idea that our business is a reflection of the artistic community we feel connected to and without this community and the people it represents we don't exist.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
Being independent means maintaining as much distance from mainstream culture and values, especially in the corporate business models, as humanly possible. It means paying attention to the process of money making and making sure the money you generate as a band, a label or person is spent in a manner consistent to your core principals. Independence is vital to maintain variety in our lives and to reflect the views of the underrepresented. Independence means having a safe place to experiment with ideas in an environment free of the pressures of commercialism, careerism, or the aggressive indifference of an ignorant monolith.

What makes a "punk" business different than any other business? Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
The only thing that makes "punk" businesses any different from other independent businesses is the ferocity with which they defend themselves from, and critique each other for, commercialism. "Punk" is unique in that it means very different things to very different people—all of whom are passionate about their beliefs. That's also the beauty and the strength of it. We don't all come from the same background so different elements take on different levels of importance to each of us.

What is DIY?
To us it means taking responsibility for seeing our projects through within our community. It means not looking to the mainstream to validate our efforts or excuse our failures, it means offering support to, and looking for support from, our communities instead of agencies. It means keeping the ground fertile ...

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
This gets a little tricky because we have no control over individual records stores and how they choose to get their records. However, there is a difference between buying something and selling something. There is also a difference between creating more options and creating fewer options. At Dischord we don't limit who buys our records. As long as we are able to offer people reliable and affordable options and the ability to bypass any systems they find distasteful then we feel we have done our job. If a major distributor wants to buy some records that is fine with us. However, we would never enter an exclusive agreement with a major distributor that limited our ability to sell to independent distributors or sell directly to stores or people. Some people say that the bigger their bands get, the more they have to rely on major distributors. To me this is backwards. When you have something that is highly coveted then you are able to feed the smaller stores and distributors something valuable, and that means the majors and chains must dance to your tune. The fact is that the major distributors work in a parallel universe and tend not to understand how this universe works, so it is pointless to try to play by their rules when there is a good chance they will never reach your core audience anyway.

As for buying from a major label? It's like going to see Star Wars... There's nothing wrong with entertainment but don't confuse it with activism.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
I try not to get too hung up on what major labels are up to because it is just a distraction from what we are doing. Again, to me it's all about the medium and entertainment. The only people who I can really critique for stepping into the major label world are those who have identified themselves with the underground and then used the good will and support of the independent community as a stepping stone. With that said, once a "punk" band signs to a major label it is impossible for me to take their message seriously. "Tolerated" rebellion could just as easily be called "contained" rebellion. People talk a lot about going to the majors or joining in the more unsavory "industry" practices out of a desire to make a career out of music. However, more often than not I get the feeling most of these people are just looking for the kind of outside validation that only MTV and Spin can afford, and never really bought into the independent community in the first place.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Bad, maybe. Just as bad, no. An indie that makes bands sign horrible contracts may be run by jerks but most likely doesn't funnel money into wars and environmental disasters. Again, follow the money. None of us are perfect but difference between a jerk and genocide is pretty clear.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs? Is it okay to trade/download mp3s of independent/DIY punk bands without paying?
As with everything, there is no black and white. I believe consumers bear quite a bit of responsibility. The difference between buying an independent record and a major label record is that a much higher percentage of the money from the indie label goes back to the label and the artist (as opposed to say...General Electric). There's nothing inherently wrong with sharing but only you know whether you are just trying to get a free lunch. If you give back in other ways then...

Chris • Plan-It-X

What are your core business ethics?
Cheap CDs. That has been the point of Plan-It-X from day one and still is. We sell CDs for $5 postage paid. We believe that punk rock music should be cheap since we are basically selling things to our friends. $5 is more than enough to keep a label running. It has kept us running well for 12 years now.

What makes a "punk" business different than any other business? Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
I would say it's a matter of being ethical. I call it ethical capitalism. No matter how much I would love to claim to be a workers' collective anarcho-business, I am, in fact, a capitalist business. However, I think there can be such a thing as ethical capitalism. Obviously a record label works on a capitalist principle since you need a sum of cash to release a record and you want to sell it for more than that so you can release more records. That is capitalism, and it doesn't have to be evil. It's really a matter of how much you sell you records for. It's a matter of not trying to make a lot of money. An ethical capitalist business should sell their product for enough to cover its cost and set back some for future products and help out the bands. Since CDs cost 95 cents to $1.60 to make, $5 is a pretty big profit. I think defining what makes a business punk is impossible. So is defining what is punk, who is punk. Punk is a huge word. I can only give my definition of punk business, which would include the ethics I mention above as well as a refusal to deal with corporations and booking agents and Clear Channel venues and things.

"Once a 'punk' band signs to a major label it is impossible for me to take their message seriously. 'Tolerated' rebellion could just as easily be called 'contained' rebellion." *-Alec / Dischord*

What is DIY?
I would say DIY means (to me), being socially and politically aware. DIY means not dealing with larger businesses. DIY means not having a booking agent. DIY means not playing shows that cost more than $5 at the door unless there are 6+ touring bands or something and not playing 21+ shows or Clear Channel venues or even venues that have bad politics, like shitty clubs that let racist bands play, etc. I would say DIY still retains a little of the core meaning. Such as, making your own records, shirts and patches. DIY means not being afraid to take chances and go on tour to lands unknown with no money and no idea of what is out there. DIY means not having $30 hooded sweatshirts. DIY means no barcodes on your records. DIY means inviting kids to stay at your house and cooking them food and having the same thing done for you when you get to their town. I would like to think that most people who call themselves DIY believe the things I do. I doubt it. The term is used too widely and by anyone with a fucking MySpace account. I would like to think all DIY punks have an interest in making the world a better place. Community building is the key. It's not the punks vs. the people. It's the poor people and the oppressed peoples, the animals and women and minorities and "weirdos," "crazies," and "criminals" vs. the powerful and rich 5% of people the rule the world with greedy intent.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
In my opinion, yes. They are companies. They have one goal, making money and I would say they are exploiting something beautiful. Music is magic to me. I love the music I release and it means a lot more to me than the $5. I really want people to hear the music I release. I don't think the people at Warner Brothers give a shit. I don't think any DIY or punk "business" should ever deal with any of these people. Even the smallest dealing is a slip in the wrong direction. We don't need them.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
No, and no. I really don't think, at least not by my personal ideal of what punk means, that a band can be punk if they are on a major label. Maybe they have a punk sound but to me a band should have a lot more than a sound to be punk. My housemate, Matty Pop Chart, plays cute songs on his classical guitar and he is punk as fuck. Much more punk than Blink 182. Of course this is just my opinion. I don't think there is ever a good reason to sign to a major. Never. Some bands try to say that they want their message to reach more people. But there's not one example of that working. I always say, your message gets lost at the mall. The connection cannot be formed in a big business setting. A basement show can save your life. Buying a $15 CD in a corporate shop will never make that impact.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Stop dealing with them. Cut all ties and function outside of their sight. Mostly, stop acting like them.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
I guess it doesn't matter really since there is nothing we can do about it. But I think it helps underground bands more than it hurts them. All the bands I know would rather have more kids at their shows than they would sell CDs. It gets the band heard. When you see a band is coming to your town, you can download their songs and sing along when they play your basement. It doesn't really bother me that much. But I hope kids keep buying music. Sometimes the donation-only basement show yields a very small amount of gas money and a band must rely on record sales. I hope kids keep supporting bands and understand why they need to.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
A simple living, yes. So many punks seem to be afraid to admit they make money off of punk rock. I'm not afraid. I work hard everyday for my label and if I had to have a job I wouldn't be able to do as much as I do for my label. I haven't worked a job for five years now. I run my label and tour in my band. The two things combined manage to pay my rent and buy me food, and that's all I need. My rent is $275 a month. I also pay $100 a month to pay rent for a local group called Page To Prisoners. I can sometimes afford to pay my friends to help me with label stuff. I don't drive a new car (I drive a wrecked mini-van that sometimes doesn't have reverse). I shop responsibly, I donate money to great groups, I share with my friends and pay for my friends' meals, etc. I put back nearly all of the money I make into the "scene." I host benefit events that raise a lot of money sometimes. I couldn't do as much if I had to be stuck at a job. Once again this all comes back to ethics. It's not what you are doing so much as it's how you do it. It's about why you do it. I do it because I love music and I believe in punk rock. Oi.

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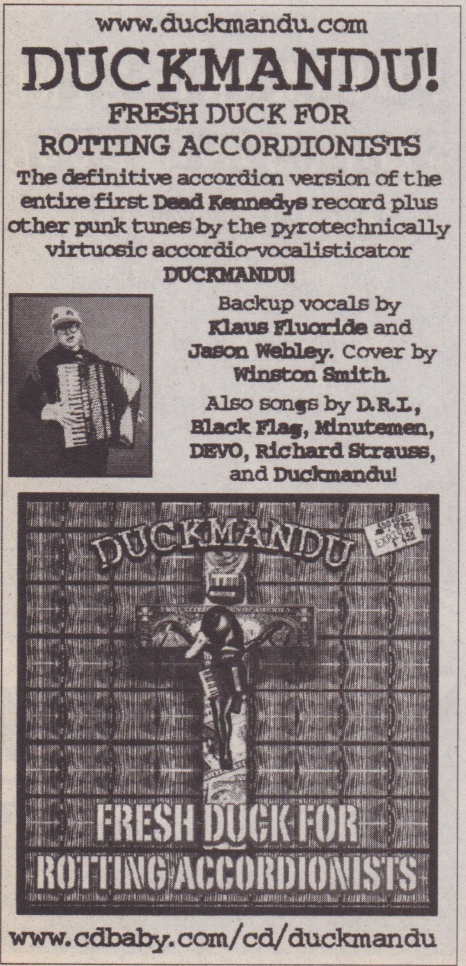
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SOVIET VALVES

Australia has given a lot of great bands to the world. From '60s garage punks to the Saints/Birdman thing, to Birthday Party, Venom P. Stinger, Cosmic Psychos, Powder Monkeys…none of these bands were terribly original, but they all came at the right moment with a kind of music that was particular to them.

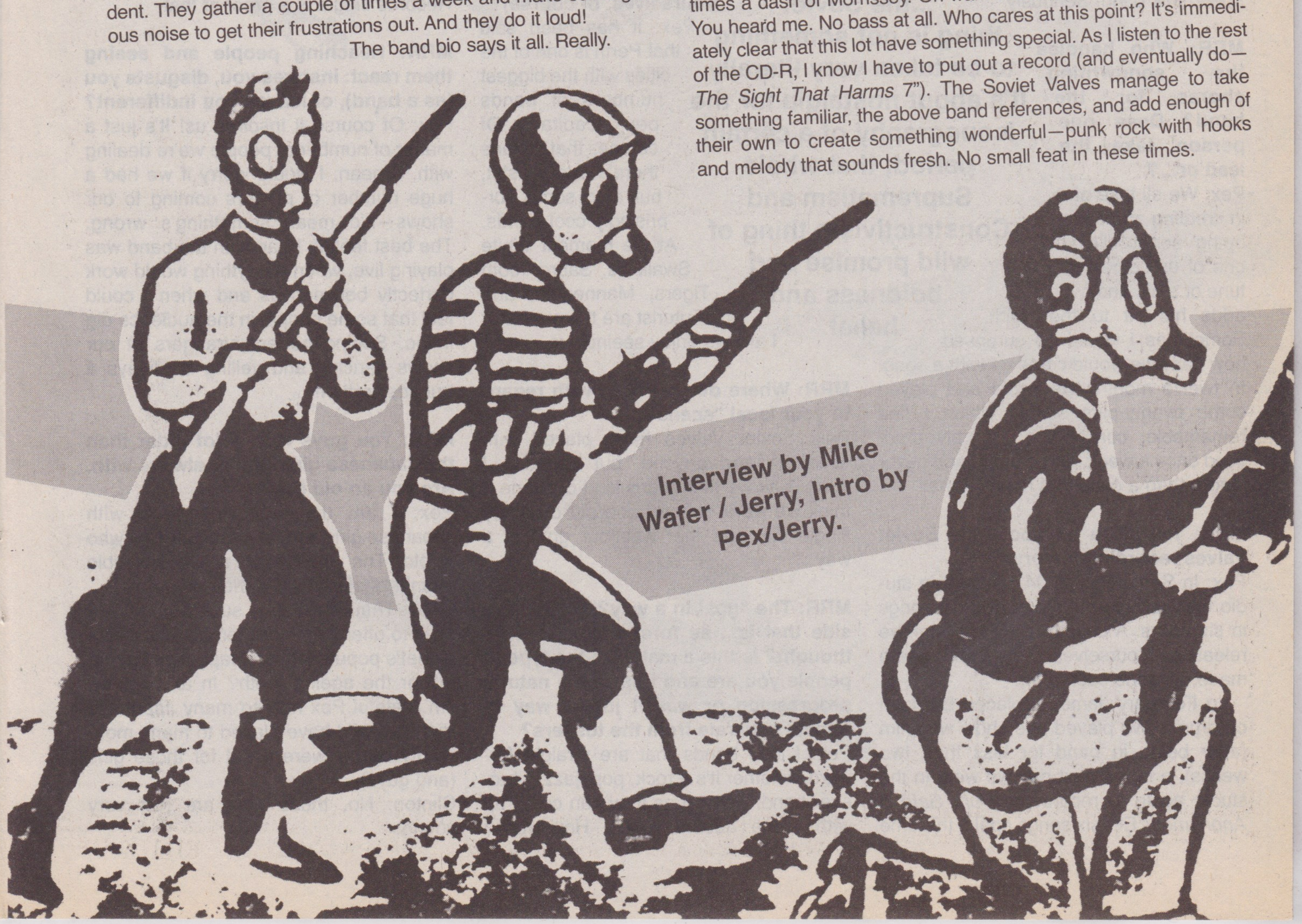
Perth is a funny place. Every now and then a band, or three, get started here and make some kind of impact. Some of the bands are on a large commercial scale, while others exist on a more obscure, cultish scale, like the Victims were, or Scientists. To these ears it seems that most of Perth bands are very relaxed in their approach to music. Perhaps that's why they usually don't last too long. Some of them go over East in pursuit of fame and fortune while others find day jobs and give up on music. Some of them just make music the best way they can, hoping someone, somewhere, will hear it and love it: case in point—Soviet Valves.

I guess the privilege for Australian bands is that there's no pressure to make it big or make loads of money. At least I hope that's the case. Most of the band members still have day jobs and do something else apart from playing. That is the case with Soviet Valves, three of them having a full-time jobs and one being a student. They gather a couple of times a week and make some glorious noise to get their frustrations out. And they do it loud!

The band bio says it all. Really.

"Soviet Valves are four guys from Perth, Australia; two guitars, drums and voice." Is that all? Well, no, that's not all. "Soviet Valves write pop songs that run at the blinding pace of their city's new six carriage commuter trains. Soviet Valves are influence filters and sentimental fops. Soviet Valves think you'd like them if you like the Buzzcocks, the Eastern Dark, Wire, or The Feelies." Below is a black and white photo of the four guys, the fops themselves, sitting and looking at the camera, looking at nothing and all the while betraying that same nothing to the viewer. They could be anyone. Running a small label, I often receive similar packages and had little reason to think this was different. You know, nothing to write home about.

The disc starts and I'm not put off. The first song is good. Quite. The viola that opens track two has me though. Yeah, I said viola. The hair on the back of my neck stands up as the drums come in. A guitar follows, and then another guitar and finally the vocals come in. I hear a slight Devoto mixed with Mike Hudson (Pagans) and at times a dash of Morrissey. Oh wait! There is no bass to be heard. You heard me. No bass at all. Who cares at this point? It's immediately clear that this lot have something special. As I listen to the rest of the CD-R, I know I have to put out a record (and eventually do—*The Sight That Harms* 7"). The Soviet Valves manage to take something familiar, the above band references, and add enough of their own to create something wonderful—punk rock with hooks and melody that sounds fresh. No small feat in these times.



Interview by Mike Wafer / Jerry, Intro by Pex/Jerry.

MRR: You're called Soviet Valves and you all have funny accents... are you from Communist Russia?

Milos: Being the twat most likely to take himself too seriously in the band it's my responsibility to say that the Soviet thing is not something to be taken very literally. It's about nostalgia for the iconography of a certain period; that whole Suprematism and Constructivism thing of wild promise and boldness and belief.

Pex: Disappointed by the fall of Communism and the mighty Soviet Union, I packed my bags and left for good. Volga, the steppe and our beautiful motherland will always have a special place in my heart.

Clinton: Dah.

MRR: You sound kind of punk rock, but kind of not. What's that all about?

Pex: I always figured we are loud and mostly fast pop band. Most people, to my surprise, think of us as punk. And that's what it's about.

Milos: I'd say that we excluded ourselves from Perth's punk rock pyramid scheme by being coherent. I agree with Pex: we're a pop band.

Clinton: Soviet Valves are a speed folk band. Seriously.

MRR: Who handles the songwriting chores for the band? Does one person take the lead or...?

Pex: We all take part in creating and developing songs. Usually one of us comes with a tune or a riff, and everyone adds his bit to the track. Sometimes I would be surprised how easy we would come up with a song. In twelve months we wrote and played some twenty-plus songs, which I find remarkable, considering we only practiced once a week, at the most, and never longer than a couple of hours, if that.

...the Soviet thing is not something to be taken very literally. It's about nostalgia for the iconography of a certain period; that whole Suprematism and Constructivism thing of wild promise and boldness and belief.

MRR: Tell me a bit about the Soviet Valves recording history.

Pex: In September 2004 we went in studio the first time and recorded six songs in six hours. A couple of weeks later we released it ourselves, 200 copies were made, all gone soon after.

In February James replaced Brendan on drums. We played one show with him (after being in band for less than two weeks), and the next day we went in the studio again to record the *Fun, Safe & Anonymous* EP: six songs again, this time it took us twelve hours to record and some six hours to mix and master. Both times we recorded at Bergerk! studio, with Al Smith at the desk. The experience was great, Al was very relaxed to work with, especially since Clinton and me were studio virgins. We took our time, had lots of breaks, discussed the recording and most of the time we agreed what we want to capture on tape. Somehow, by pure luck, I guess, it all went so smooth and easy. Truly, we were four heads thinking in similar way.

The CDEP was launched on the 20th of May 2005 in Perth. This time we only made 100 copies, which went pretty much the same night. A week after the launch, our singer Milos went to London, but not before we recorded another bunch of songs. This time it was live at our rehearsal space, with one Dave Stein (from local punks the New Husseins). We hired ten microphones, Dave did the recording, and later we mixed it at Bergerk! in three hours. Altogether there are nine songs, most of them never recorded before.

MRR: Are there any noteworthy acts/bands in Perth (beside yourselves, of course)?

Pex: It has been said that Perth is one of the cities with the biggest numbers of bands per capita. Of course, that means there's a lot of shit, but also some surprisingly cool bands. At the moment White Swallows, Sabre Tooth Tigers, Mannequin, and the Futurist are the ones that I always enjoy seeing live.

MRR: Where do you fit in with regard to your local "scene"?

Pex: Soviet Valves have played with everyone and anyone, but honestly, I don't think we fit into any kind of scene. I think we were the odd one out on every single bill, and that was our goal in a way...

MRR: The "goal in a way?" To be outside that is... as forethought or after thought? Is this a matter of the type of people you are and this was a natural progression or was it just a way to remain separate from the tossers?

Pex: I love bands that are straight forward, whether it's a rock, pop, jazz, whatever band, as long as they can come up with some decent tunes. However, I always preferred the ones who are trying to be a bit different. For example, Mission of Burma were nothing terribly new or original, still they had a distinguished sound. I hope Soviet Valves have a unique sound. We don't need to separate from tossers. From our first gig it was obvious who the tosser is in the line-up of bands playing on the night. We always stuck out like dogs balls! If we were playing with a bunch of punk bands we were different because we didn't sing about beer and fucking girls up the arse. When we played with indie bands we stuck out with our volume, attitude and stage presence.

To be outside the mediocre "scene" was not just a goal, but a necessity, something that came naturally. We haven't been together as a band long, but all of us have been in love with the music for years (some of us for decades, he he) and we clearly knew what we wanted and what we didn't want. Writing and performing accessible pop music was never a goal, at least not in a commercial sense. Still, we knew that our music can reach some people and that they can react to it. The feedback that we're getting from the SmartGuy Records single is a proof of that.

MRR: Reaching people and seeing them react: inspires you, disgusts you (as a band), or leaves you indifferent?

Pex: Of course it inspires us! It's just a matter of number of people we're dealing with. I mean, I would worry if we had a huge number of punters coming to our shows—it'd mean something's wrong. The best feeling I had with the band was playing live, when everything would work perfectly between us and when I could feel that some people in the audience dig it too. Seeing perfect strangers at our shows dancing and yelling is always a true inspiration!

MRR: You guys look a lot older than the Japanese girls you're always with. Are you an old band?

Pex: I am the only one seen with Japanese girls and I am the only one who is old. The other guys are responsible members of society in their prime.

Milos: That question is such a minefield. Who to offend first: the female half of the planet's population, the Japanese twentieth or the ageing tenth? In all honesty, I'm grateful Pex has so many Japanese friends. We'd have played to many more empty rooms were it not for those girls (and guys).

Clinton: No, those girls are just very young.

MRR: Your bass player never turns up to your gigs. What's with that?

Milos: He left for Brisbane before we formed, and came back when we were taking a break.

Pex: She is usually too busy gulping borsch and washing it down with straight vodka.

Clinton: The bass player really has no part in the band. He is on the payroll because we owe his mother a favor. I can't ever recall him coming to a single one of our shows.

MRR: How did this affect the band—both in terms of songwriting and performing (I actually don't know if you're honest intent was to *not* have one or the fool never really showed up)?

Pex: The decision not to have a bass was honest! We wanted to do something a bit different and thought if we had bass we would sound "just like another band with a bass." I always loved bands with no bass: Gories, Cheater Slicks... but the one I loved the most was a Serbian band Partibrejkers (Partybreakers), who released a garage rock 'n' roll masterpiece LP back in 1985, when they only had two guitars and no bass.

MRR: The interplay between the two of guitarists is a big part of your sound I think. To me that's another element that sets you apart. Tell me about that.

Pex: The interplay between guitars came with time, as we were trying to develop our songs. We didn't spend much time doing it at shows, so I guess me and Clinton have been trying to figure it out at home and then bringing it to the rehearsal. When we were doing the *Fun, Safe & Anonymous* EP Clinton has overdubbed a few guitar bits on a couple of songs and I think it worked really well. Al Smith, our recorder, did a great job making it sound a bit bassy...not having bass did draw some surprise looks from the punters. Honestly, don't see why, as nowadays there are zillion bands with no bass. I guess because we're not a "garage r 'n' r" band

MRR: Pex, does your love of jazz have anything to do with this style of guitar work in the band?

Pex: I don't think my opinion of jazz has much impact on my playing/our song structure. When I started playing with the Valves I was thinking, "What should my guitar sound like." I am the first one to say that my guitar playing is nothing special, in technical terms. But, I realized one very important thing: no matter what kind of style I have, it is *my* style! So I started developing on that, and I'm happy with the result.

MRR: Were there any significant influences, music or non-music related, in shaping up the Soviet Valves?

Pex: Of course, everything is an influence. Personally, I decided for sure I want to start a band when I was in Japan in March/April 2004. Don't know why. Perhaps because I realized that so many local bands/acts over there just make music and leave free copies of it at the record stores for people to take home. I wanted to do the same—just make some cool music and take it to the people.

Other influences are: everyday life and struggle, good movies (I love anything from Fritz Lang to Wong Kar Wai to Takashi Miike), good books, good food, great moments in love, and not so great ones too...

The bass player is usually too busy gulping borsch and washing it down with straight vodka. He really has no part in the band. He is on the payroll because we owe his mother a favor. I can't ever recall him coming to a single one of our shows.

MRR: I'd say the Soviet Valves, while not wholly original, do seem to take from influence and add their own bit to the din to make something quite fresh and, ahem, exciting. Much more than new wrapping on an old package in my eyes. Does this make sense? Do you agree?

Pex: Yes, I agree. It's hard to be original these days. I mean, pretty much anything has been done in music, hasn't it? Still, there's always room for doing something a bit different. Most people say we sound similar to Buzzcocks. Now, that is a compliment, but they were certainly not my favorite band and I'm sure the other people in the band will agree. I love their early stuff, but there are at least twenty other bands that I love much more. None of the influences are there consciously, it just happens to be that way.

MRR: Do you, personally or as a band, have issues with those who pursue both artistic and (consciously) commercial goals?

Pex: I personally dislike people/bands/artists who pursue commercial goals, in cases when that means compromising their art. I want my art/music/whatever to be accessible to as many people as possible, but only in order so they can make up their mind about it. If they love it great! If they don't, tough luck.

As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to music, not many acts/bands can maintain their creative peak. So, it's sad to see most of them keep doing it after few albums and sounding like crap.

MRR: If I wanted to buy Soviet Valves releases for my uncle Charlie, what would you recommend?

Milos: What he said. Also, tell Charlie to mail us on sovietvalves@hotmail.com, and we just might burn him a CD-R with some of the early stuff...

Pex: The two CD-EPs and a split 7" single with Whitechapel have been out of print for some months. However, our new 7"EP is available now on SmartGuy Records, as well as people can download it on iTunes. Whatever that is...

MRR: My crystal ball is broken. What are Soviet Valves doing in the future?

Milos: When your crystal ball broke one of the pieces flew into my eye. Now I can only see backwards.

Pex: Watching the grass grow. Eating good food. Practicing a lot of safe sex. Hopefully, get something else released.

Clinton: They don't know. The tall guitarist is said to be doing some solo gigs where he just wields a bass, the singer is said to be in England and getting more hideous by the minute, (it rubs off don't ya know), the drummer is certainly alive and playing with someone and the smaller guitarist is battling his own private addiction hell.

Pex: To conclude this blabber on even more personal note, I'd like to state that playing in Soviet Valves gives me so much pleasure and happiness. The other three guys are not only musicians that I'd like to play with any day of the week, but also some of my best friends and extremely nice, intelligent and funny guys. And that's, in my humble opinion, the core of a good band. We are not slick players, but we can churn out a decent tune, and Milos can come up with great lyrics and vocal melodies/arrangements without any struggle. The moments when we play together and everything goes well are some of the highlights of my existence and I will always cherish it! By the time this goes to print, the EP will have been out for a couple of months. Hopefully, people will buy it and like it. I do.

SUBURBAN DEATH MACHINE

Interview by Eric xxx the Red Meisberger.
Photographs by Christopher Schwarzott.

If a person who had never heard of punk came to me and said, "What is it? What's it all about?" I would probably want to play them some Suburban Death Machine records. Hailing from Pittsburgh, PA, SDM encompasses all of what I fell in love with when I discovered hardcore and punk. They are passionate, thought-provoking, angry without being trite, deeply ensconced in the DIY ethic, and they sound great, too. On a cold January evening in early 2006 I sat down with Ian, Dan and Aaron and had a nice talk.

MRR: LET'S START WITH WHO YOU ARE, YOUR AGE AND WHAT YOU DO IN THE BAND.

Aaron: I'm Aaron, I'm 26 and I play bass and look pretty.

Ian: Ian, 27, guitar and label.

Dan: Dan, 30, vocals.

MRR: EXPLAIN THE NAME OF THE BAND.

Ian: A lot of bands named themselves after some other band's songs and I thought it would be more relevant for us to name it after a virtually unknown Pittsburgh band and give a nod back to what came before us here as opposed to picking some generic Minor Threat or Black Flag.

Dan: I just grabbed the next record I could find in my room, which was a Necracedia record.

Ian: So it was either "Suburban Death Machine" or "Potatoes and Pancakes!"

MRR: IS THE SONG "CURSED TOWN" ABOUT PITTSBURGH?

Dan: It's about Pittsburgh, but it's a general song about living in dead cities. The rust belt, or whatever you want to call it. It's about living in a town with no hope that's corrupt and fucked up and there's no way out.

MRR: WHAT IS IT ABOUT PITTSBURGH THAT MAKES PEOPLE LOVE IT AND HATE IT THE WAY THAT THEY DO?

Dan: I don't know why people love it. They're brainwashed by their horrible parents and horrible teachers and families. I think this town is a wasteland. I don't like it very much.

Aaron: I think it's like, "We have to stick together because we've been through such hard times" and people instill that in their children. The idea of when the steel mills were closing, people were going through some shit.

Dan: We have a museum dedicated to an artist who fled Pittsburgh because he hated it so much and bad mouthed it every chance he got: the Warhol Museum.

Ian: And, no, it's not much better elsewhere.

Dan: Everyone who has lived here has ruined it. It is cheap to live here, though.

MRR: I KNOW YOU ALL WORK IN VERY DIFFERENT JOBS. MAYBE WE COULD TALK ABOUT THAT?

Aaron: I work at the Andy Warhol Museum.

Dan: You washed dishes for 12,000 years before that.

Aaron: Yeah, I washed dishes at Duquesne University for a ton of years but now I work at the Andy Warhol Museum. I have no graphic arts background, no art history background. I got the job because I know some people and I know that sounds shitty, but I pretty much have the job so I can be a gallery attendant and read all day.

Ian: I work at the East End Food Co-Op. I put natural foods on the shelves. I have a degree in social work that enables me to do this. It's like Pittsburgh. It's a trap. It's comfortable; it allows me to go on tour, if that were to happen. I can work overtime there to put out records. It's an easy job. It's hard to get out of.

Dan: I work for a small mom-and-pop-owned record chain, dealing with media entertainment type stuff. It's nice because all my life I wanted to work in a record store so I could deal with records, video games and movies, which is my favorite stuff in the world. I'm a manager, which is kind of weird because I'm "The Man." I have to hire and fire and deal with all sorts of petty bullshit.

MRR: HOW DO WORK AND THE ISSUES SURROUNDING IT COME UP IN SDM'S MUSIC AND LYRICS AND WHAT YOU DO?

Dan: Work's not my life. I've written a handful of songs about work. My job is easy. It's the easiest job I've ever had and I don't take it home with me so I don't write tons of lyrics about it. It's just dealing with customers that gets me down.

Ian: It's more just general disrespect from customers that translates over into the music and turns the music into my outlet. I guess also where I work, the administration is part of the bullshit. It's supposed to be a co-op but there's still the same bullshit as working at some chain store. It's top down. Workers get the shaft at every turn. It should be different, but it's not. It could be worse, but the fact that it mirrors that so much, it kind of weighs on you from time to time. In a way it's not a bad job because I do work with good people. The administration is still this looming presence.

Aaron: My only problem is courtesy and human decency on the smallest level. Nobody, from the customers to the people I work with, understands common courtesy and human decency.

MRR: IS THERE A REASON WHY THE ALBUM SLEEVES LOOK THE WAY THEY DO? THEY LOOK VERY "CLASSICALLY" PUNK AND I WONDERED IF YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE.

Dan: I think it's just that I don't know any better. It's just what I like.

Ian: Maybe it fell together accidentally, maybe on purpose. The music is straightforward. The lyrics are straightforward. The artwork is straightforward. It's all we know.

Aaron: I think feeding into the persona that we've made for ourselves with the whole "Not here to make friends" thing is pseudo-egotism. It's not real. It's like the idea that we're on the covers of both the records. It's kind of egotistical but it's not. It's being egotistical for the sake of being funny. That's a throwback to the '80s type hardcore thing, too.

Dan: If it's good enough for the Ramones, it's good enough for us. Aaron did the layout for the LP, I did it for the 7". It was all created by the band for the band.

MRR: TALK ABOUT THE HOMEMADE SAMPLE INTRO ON THE 7".

Ian: Just looking back to some classic records like Screeching Weasel and Reagan Youth, no one does the homemade sample anymore.

Dan: People are so fucking unoriginal that they have to steal some shit from a movie that somebody else stole 20 years ago.

Ian: Not to mention, I don't know about all the pressing plants, but I know United started cracking down on that stuff. I think we came up with it in the studio.

Aaron: I just wanted to say "New Order" on our record.

MRR: YOU SEEM TO MIX STYLES AND TEMPOS ON THE RECORD. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THAT AND WHAT TYPES OF MUSIC HELP YOU DIVERSIFY THE SOUND?

Dan: I guess at first it was all pretty quick. Ian was still in Crucial Unit at the time so he was in the "all fast all the time" kind of mindset. And then the more melodic stuff started to creep in over time.

Ian: I think, on a very basic level, it's just more fun to write with variety. If you have a slow song, it's going to make the fast song seem faster. It's just going to catch your ear. If you listen to most records, it's all one speed. There're very few bands that diversify. On our LP much more than the 7" it's up and down for the whole record.

Aaron: I also don't like the idea that, especially in this generation of punk, there are so many subgenres and so many categories. When people start a band they say, "We have to be this specific punk sound."

Ian: Dan mentioned Crucial Unit. By the time that band ended, everything was so complex and out of control. It got real metal and noodly. When this band became my main focus I wanted it to be more direct.

MRR: IF YOU COULD EXPOSE SOMEONE TO ANY BOOK, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Dan: The easy answer would probably be *The People's History of the United States.*

Aaron: There's this really short book called *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. Other than that, what's that West Coast oral history thing?

Dan: *We Got the Neutron Bomb.*

Ian: I really enjoy reading punk rock history, how punk rock was back then. There were no boundaries. Mission of Burma played with The FUs and stuff like that! That should still be going on, but now it's like, "This is indie rock and this is punk rock and never the two shall meet."

Dan: A lot of punk kids don't know or care what came before them. That *American Hardcore* book, as dumb as it can be at times, is really interesting because you can see that the '80s weren't perfect and all those bands weren't saints, but all those people had to put up with way more shit than we're ever going to have to deal with. They didn't have Hot Topic and all that bullshit. There was no outlet. If you had a shaved head or Dead Kennedys shirt you were going to get the fucking shit beaten out of you no matter where you were. It's important that kids learn about that.

MRR: SOME MIGHT FIND THE RECORD ANGRY. DID IT EVER ENTER INTO YOUR MIND THAT SO MUCH VENOMOUS ANGER COULD BE WRITTEN OFF AS BEING TRITE?

Dan: That never really occurred to me. Not every song on the record's about hating someone. I mean, there's a song about building a robot body and flying off into outer space.

MRR: YEAH, WE'LL GET TO THAT LATER.

Dan: I just love classic hardcore and punk and it's all based on being angry or angry in love, or desperate. They're all really strong emotions. It's energetic. I couldn't imagine just writing a song. I don't know what the fuck people write songs about that aren't angry. I'm not gonna write a love song.

Aaron: There's a quote from Henry David Thoreau that I'm going to paraphrase: If people aren't talking about something that's dear to them and they can't get passionate and can't be strong about it then it's just gossip, so why bother?

Ian: My thought on it is that it's not like we're just this pack of random angry dudes. A lot of the lyrics and the aesthetic, and the way we present ourselves are reactions to situations. We're not just angry for the sake of it and it's not like we're pissed off teens. There are reasons for it, there are things in our lives that affect us and this is our outlet and how we react to it and present it to other people.

MRR: COULD YOU TALK ABOUT THE SONG, "IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT"?

Dan: I never tried to write a political song before and I didn't really try to write that one. I have my politics and I'm passionate about them but I don't feel that they're everyone's business or that I should be beating people over the head with it. I just got so fucking sick of those goddamn yellow ribbons and hearing people talk about how just because some fucking dumbass kid got blown up in Iraq he's a hero. The last time I checked, it's a volunteer army, so I don't feel bad for the people who get blown up and maimed over there because they were stupid enough to go to begin with. For all the people who are so proud of the war and so proud of Bush, who made it such an issue in the election, when it's their kid that gets blown up I hope that they thank the guy they elected and how he doesn't give a fuck and he's the one who is making their children die. You're so proud of the war, be proud when your kid is a fucking pile of shit on some terrorist's boot. It's just completely sick. America's divided. If you don't agree with Bush or the war then you're a traitor. And Bush and his people have said that in a time of war you shouldn't criticize the president.

I listen to a lot of talk radio and I hate what most liberals have to say because, even though I agree with them, most of the time it's just knee jerk reactionary bullshit name-calling, which I don't think is going to change anybody's mind. I like to listen to the conservatives because they bring up views that I don't hear very often. But they do say the most absurd things, about how protesters should be locked up and the ACLU should be arrested under RICO statutes, which were the laws that were made to break up organized crime! They say anyone who protests or doesn't agree with the president should be arrested and considered treasonous. This country is just wacked out of its head at this point.

MRR: DO YOU THINK ABOUT POLITICS ON A NATIONAL OR GLOBAL LEVEL OR ON A MORE PERSONAL LEVEL?

Ian: I'd say I retreat from it somewhat. Over the last few years, when you add it all up, everything seems pretty futile. You're going to go crazy if you don't ignore it to some degree. You've got to go on and live your life. You still have to fight for things and do what you feel is right, but if you read that stuff all the time it can drive you crazy to a degree.

Aaron: I agree with that totally. There was a time when I was trying to get more interested in politics. At that time I was a lot angrier as a human being anyway and it was just feeding that rage. I'd start getting worked up. People would say I was yelling and I'd be like "*I'm not yelling!*" I'd be freaking out. You only get one life to live. Why would you want to be miserable and angry all the time?

Dan: That's what our records are for.

Aaron: Exactly! Unless a large part of the population is behind you, you're not going to get a lot changed. I know that sounds shitty and depressed, but whatever. Pittsburgh had that one protest at the beginning of the war and it was huge. So much of the community was involved. It was one of the biggest protests in the history of Pittsburgh. But then after that, nothing really came of anything. On a personal level, I interact with everyone I come into contact with. If they're interested in what I have to say, then we'll have a discussion and exchange ideas. Maybe each of us will learn something. But beyond that, I'm not going to preach something down your throat. I've had enough of that from militant vegans to militant political crazies to militant straight edge kids. Anyone who is that militant—well, as I'm poking fun at everyone in the room here…

Dan: Those straight edge vegan kids are the worst.

Ian: Especially the bike-riding kind!

Dan: How many hardcore activists do you know that are killing themselves with drugs and alcohol? It's an epidemic in the activist community and I can only assume that part of it is that's the only way they can cope with all the bullshit they read about and deal with on a day to day level. With all of the horrible things going on and the feelings of futility, boozing and shooting up become the only means of escape and I just don't want to live like that.

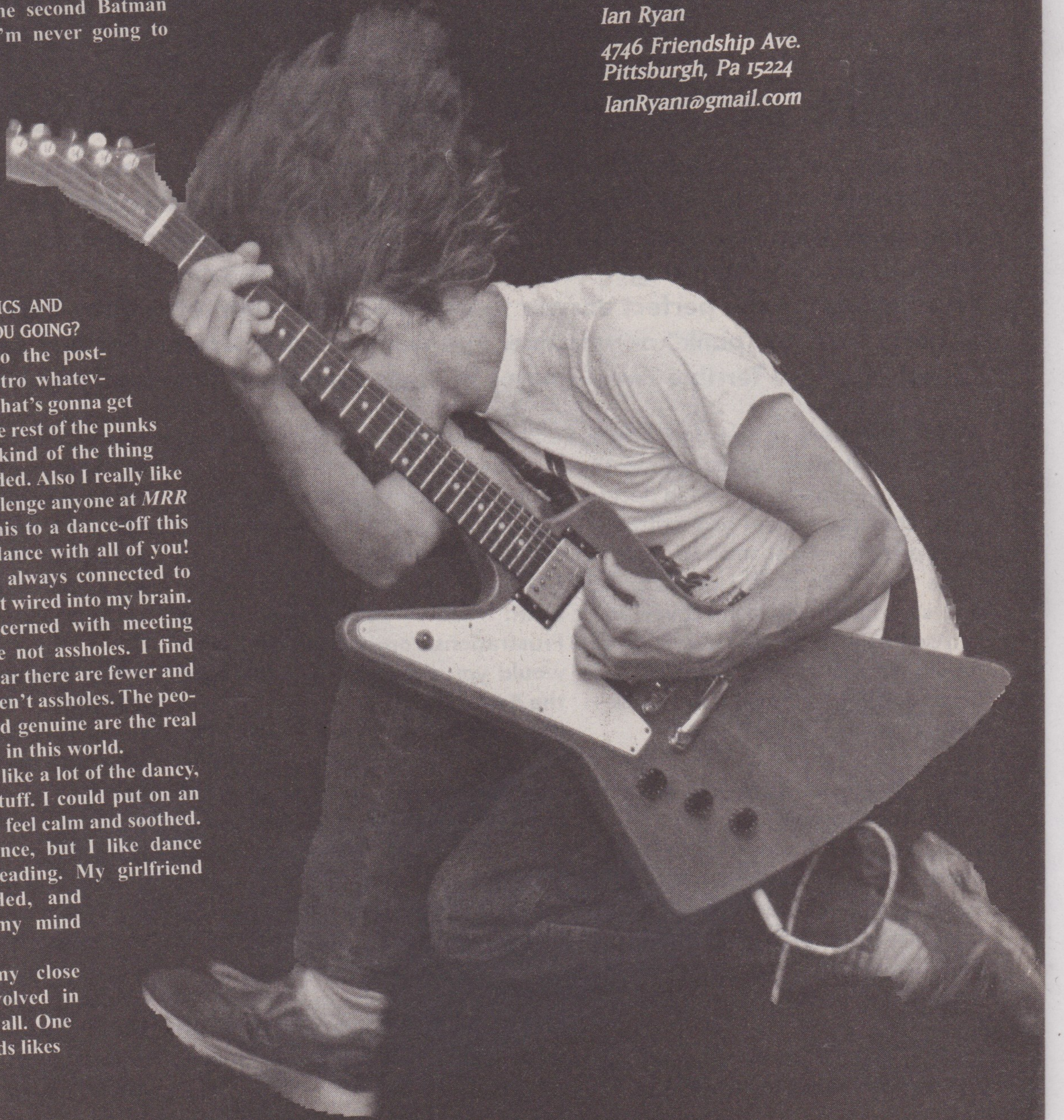
MRR: ON THE LP, ONE SONG'S ABOUT A ZOMBIE-STYLE TAKEOVER, ANOTHER'S ABOUT GOVERNMENT MIND CONTROL. HOW DOES THAT *1984*/ORWELLIAN/DYSTOPIAN IDEA OF SOMETHING GOOD GETTING TOTALLY FUCKED COME UP?

Dan: I read a lot of comic books, like 40 to 50 different titles a month. I totally immerse myself in that world. I've always liked songs about spies and mind control and all of that. I wanted to try a song like that, one with that Cold War vibe. I don't know about these guys, they're a little younger than me, but when I was growing up I was completely convinced there was going to be a nuclear war. I remember being in third or fourth grade and reading about it in the *Weekly Reader*. They didn't teach us to hide behind our desks and the same stupid shit that they told our parents, but I definitely remember that there were fallout shelter signs at my school. You knew where the shelters were, it was a fact of life and it filled me with such dread and fear all the time. That's another thing about the punk scene now. The threat of nuclear destruction isn't there. It was a very real thing in the 80s. I was just trying to capture that. It was horrible, but it was

an interesting moment in time. "Recharge" comes from—well, I'm an atheist. I don't believe in any kind of afterlife. The idea of death isn't something I'm completely comfortable with, so if I could put my brain into a robot body and live forever, that's something I'd be interested in doing. These guys thought that was pretty amazing when I said that after practice one day. Then I decided I'd try to write a song about it. Since watching the *Planet of the Apes* movies—I think it was the second one—where Mr. Charlton Heston dies when he hits the button that blows up the world, I always thought that I wouldn't mind dying if I could kill everyone else on the planet.

Ian: And as the rhythm section, we get behind him on this one.

Dan: The reason people don't want to die is because they're afraid they'll miss out on something really cool. Like, I'm never going to know how the second Batman movie turns out, or I'm never going to know how *Lost* is going to end, or some fucking bullshit like that. So if you completely wipe out any chance of anyone else knowing that stuff, it's not so bad.



MRR: ASIDE FROM COMICS AND MOVIES, WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING?

Aaron: I'm way into the post-punk-death rock-electro whatever you want to call it that's gonna get me made fun of by the rest of the punks in the scene. That's kind of the thing that keeps me grounded. Also I really like to dance and I'll challenge anyone at *MRR* or anyone reading this to a dance-off this second! I'd love to dance with all of you! On top of that, I'm always connected to the Internet. I want it wired into my brain.

Ian: I'm more concerned with meeting real people who are not assholes. I find with each passing year there are fewer and fewer people who aren't assholes. The people who are true and genuine are the real salvation that I find in this world.

Dan: Like Aaron, I like a lot of the dancy, new wave type of stuff. I could put on an Erasure record and feel calm and soothed. I don't like to dance, but I like dance music. That, or reading. My girlfriend keeps me grounded, and from not losing my mind most of the time.

Dan: Most of my close friends aren't involved in the punk scene at all. One of my closest friends likes punk, likes dance music, but hates the idea of a scene. I've seen eight million of the same fucking dumb kids that are ruining the scene now with different faces and haircuts over the past however many years and he's seen it with the shows he goes to. He would always talk about how there were so many rules. The goth scene is just as stupid as the punk scene, which is just as stupid as the bike-riding scene, which is just as stupid as the fucking watch collector scene or the homemade porno trading scene or whatever. It's totally ridiculous. If you can't expand your horizons and boundaries outside of your own little scene, then you're doomed to be a miserable failure for the rest of your life and probably drop out and go work in an office downtown with all the other assholes.

Aaron: Also, I grew up in a strictly Christian household, strict to the point that they were almost like snake handlers, so I've always had an issue with who I was, spiritually or religiously, and obviously I had issues with it early on. I just like the idea of fulfilling your own potential. Lately with reading I've gotten into Buddhism and Taoism.

Dan: I went through that exact thing when I was your age.

Aaron: Really? That's awesome.

Dan: I'll save you a robot body to put your brain into whenever it's time.

Aaron: I like who I'm turning into!

MRR: Any closing thoughts?

Aaron: Start a band.

Ian: Don't start a band.

Dan: I've got nothing. This interview's over. I've given you more than I meant to.

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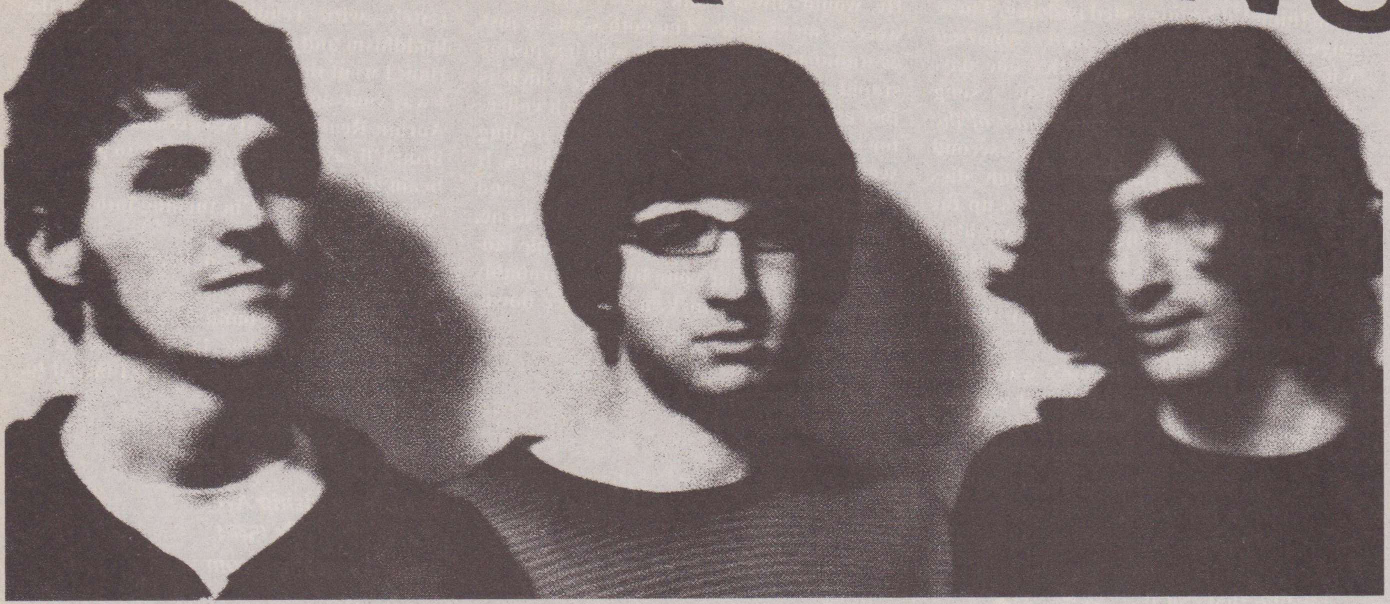
FRUSTRATIONS



I first heard of the Frustrations when they were recommended to me by multiple friends around the Detroit area. The first time I saw them, I saw three quiet mild-mannered kids politely set up their gear, then followed with a splash of intense destructo noise that ended in said gear trashed all over the stage. Noisy without indulgence, catchy without being boring, the Frustrations are the perfect answer to your boredom with retro throwbacks and the altogether boringness of "punk" or whatever you want to call it... Interview and introduction by Chris Campbell of the Terrible Twos. Photos by Chris Campbell, Ddenizen, and Marianna Vermiglio.

MRR: Obvious first question, when and how did the Frustrations start?
Colin: Um, I think me and Sean decided to start the band, I had written a song or two beforehand and we did some four track stuff. I called Scott and said he should come over and jam sometime with the intentions of having him join the band.
Scott: Really? (laughs) I don't think I knew that.

MRR: Did you guys know each other from school?
Colin: Sorta, and also from our other bands Fontana and the Yarbles.
Sean: I don't really remember if it was from school or shows, I just remember talking to Scott sometimes. [laughs]

MRR: What does a typical Frustrations practice consist of?
Colin: Scott giving me shit about everything [laughs].
Scott: Yeah, kinda [laughs]. We usually play songs and then Colin and Sean take smoke breaks.

MRR: How did the name Frustrations come about and what would you do if you met the band the Frustration?
Scott: Kick their asses! (laughs) No, we were just sitting around and I came up with the name out of the frustration of thinking of a name.
Colin: That's clever. Too bad there is another band called the Frustrations!
Scott: Oh yeah! They have a website thefrustrations.com, its like ten old dudes with saxophones [laughs].

MRR: Your 7" is out on X! Records; what's the plan as far as future releases?
Scott: Yeah we haven't really figured out what were gonna do exactly but we have enough songs, so we'll probably be doing a full-length soon. We are gonna have a track on an upcoming compilation of new Detroit bands on X!, which is my label.

MRR: That leads me into the next question. Scott, you run X! Records, what's the history of the label and what are its future releases?
Scott: I came up with the idea in 2003, the name X! stands for the variable, like in math, representing all of the bands on the label doing everything with enthusiasm and such. I mostly made it at first to release a two song demo of my first band the Skinny Fists. It then became more of a small CD-R label, in the past year it's gotten more serious I guess. We

released the Frustrations single and Terrible Twos single as well. Next we have a Tyvek single and the compilation I mentioned.

MRR: What would you say were the best and worst shows you have played?
Sean: Probably the worst would be our last show at Small's, at least for me because I hate that place, they cut our set short.
Scott: …and the sound guys are always dicks.
Colin: …and its really expensive and our friends couldn't afford to go.
Sean: So the people who actually paid to get in only saw a couple of songs, and I kinda smashed my bass. One of my favorites was when we played at the Lager House with Larval and also the Fourth Street Fair.
Scott: Playing outside was fun, and Colin smashed his guitar against a tree.
Colin: By accident I just sorta ran into it. It was at the last song too, so it looked like I meant to do it.

MRR: Often times you guys are the youngest band on the bill, what is that like?
Colin: It makes people think we are better, cause we're like "good for our age" (laughs). It's always like "these guys are good and they're only like seventeen years old!" except we're older than that (laughs).
Scott: It's alright, but we usually have to play first.

MRR: John Aho wants to know, if your band was a musical instrument what would it be?
Scott: I guess the oboe or something cause it's kinda unpopular. (laughs)

MRR: When listening to your record, one gets the feeling there is no definite sound you aimed for, that it's more of a "natural noise" is this correct?
Scott: Yeah I'd say so. Our songs usually come from the three of us just jamming parts.

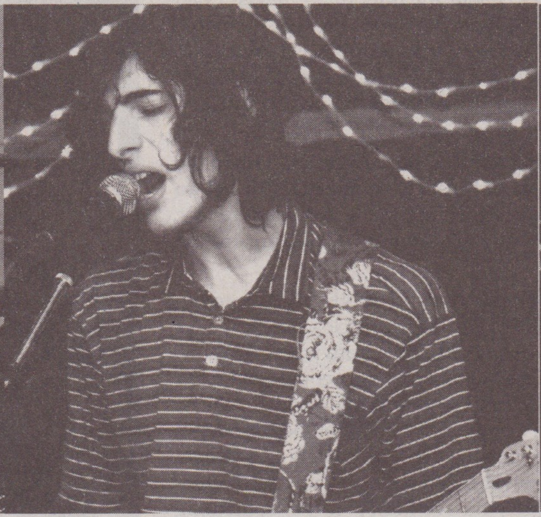
MRR: Here's a tough one, do you ultimately consider yourself a punk band?
Scott: Oh, not this question…I guess we are punk in the way we don't really have any goals or anything. We just kinda do what we wanna do.
Colin: No, but I think whatever we are playing we do with a punk energy, whatever some bullshit like that .

MRR: Scott you recorded the 7", was it difficult to both record and perform on the record, and would you consider recording with someone else next time around?
Scott: Yeah, I would like to record with someone else sometime, so I don't have to run back and forth all day mixing and setting up mics. It's kinda cool though just to have full control, and not have to pay money.

MRR: What other bands/venues are worth anything in Detroit?
Scott: Not Terrible Twos that's for sure (laughs)! No, Tyvek, Heroes and Villians, the Interiors, Fontana right Colin?, Human Eye, Tentacle Lizardo, Spitunes, and Mahonies! Mahonies!

MRR: Venues?
Sean: Chill and Mingle.
Scott: Even though it has a stupid name (laughs). Bohemian Ballroom.
Colin: Not Small's

MRR: What touring plans, if any, do you have?
Scott: I think we should tour this summer. Definitely the Midwest. Hopefully Chicago sometime soon.



FRUSTRATIONS

GEORGE HURCHULLA

Author of *Going Underground: American Punk, 1979-1992*

MRR: Did you come from a particularly musical background? Were your parents in any way musical? In what ways was George Hurchalla pre-punk different to that after discovering punk? And, obviously this is open to conjecture, but what kinda person do you think you would be now had you not discovered punk rock?

George: I came from a hopelessly unmusical background. My extended family occasionally got together and bellowed folk songs drunkenly at the top of their lungs out of key, but that was the closest we came to music. A piano collected dust throughout my childhood in our house. I think that helped in my appreciation of punk, if anything, caring more about the visceral part of music than the technical part. I had a better record collection after I discovered punk, that's for sure. I was a middle class kid without immediate problems, and too isolated in a small town for punk to have made a huge difference in my everyday life. It just made everything more exciting, though. It was fun discovering my exhibitionist side. I don't know that I would've been so different a person without punk rock, it fit my beliefs rather than destroying any old ones, but I would've just listened to much shittier music.

MRR: You state in the book that punk rock came to you in 1980, via your brother's Sex Pistols records, at a time when you were wallowing in the sounds of early '70s Dinosaur Rock. Like anyone who discovered punk in the early-to-mid '80s, it was a life-changing discovery. What specifically attracted you to the Pistols and what was your immediate reaction?

George: I don't know. There's a quote in the new edition from Karen from the Tucson band Conflict, about a friend playing the Pistols for her in '78 and her going, "That's awful! Play it again!" Maybe there was some of the same thing with me. It just had all this energy and attitude that grabbed me right away. As soon it as it was done, you had to play it again. I hadn't ever heard anything like the NY Dolls or Iggy at that point, so about the only thing maybe I had heard with attitude was something like the Mott the Hoople songs "Violence" or "Crash Street Kids." I didn't know that was what I really was looking for, but when I heard it, I knew. I went through a huge Stalinist purge of my record collection and got rid of most of my old stuff and replaced it all with punk and new wave.

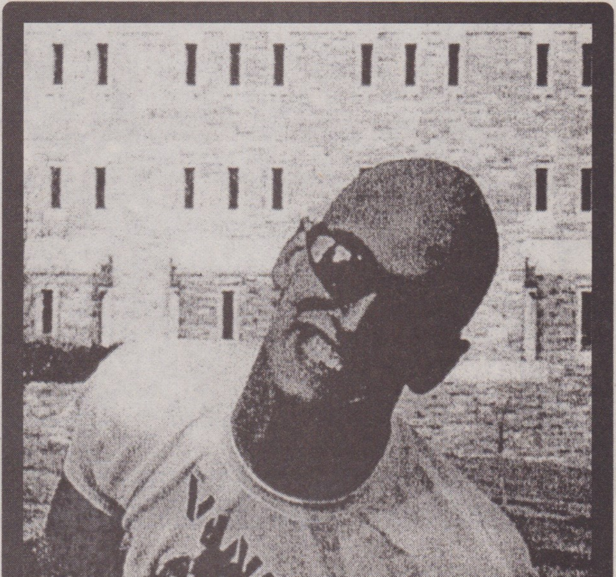
MRR: How much alienation did you and your brother feel growing up in the seemingly punk rock-ostracized confines of West Coast Florida? It's not an area that is instantly thought of as having a thriving punk rock community; did you face much adversity for your punk rock fandom? Is that area of the country any different today?

George: We were on the East Coast of Florida, but my brother was going to college on the West Coast. On the Gulf side of Florida, being close to Tampa, he was near a city with a punk rock scene, which I didn't have anywhere near me. Plus he was at a really small, eclectic college with interesting people from other places with good musical exposure. Still, punk was quickly latched onto by the surfers and skaters of Florida, and in fact the first I heard of the Vibrators I think was in a Florida surf magazine. So hanging out with surfers and skaters who got into it soon after me, there was never much sense of being ostracized. Like I said in the book, there was no one who even knew it was something they were supposed to hate. The area isn't much different today, just more developed, it's mainly a community of retired old people, like most of South Florida.

MRR: Moving on to the book, where did the basic inspiration/motivation come from for writing it? What made you feel the need document that era of punk rock and do you feel you achieved you goal?

George: I had only seen one book at all on the subject when I first got the idea, and it had left me fairly disappointed. I thought I had a story to tell that needed to be told. It just amazed me that all the mainstream music media took great pains to avoid mentioning that era and that the bands I loved were responsible for the tremendous change in modern music. They would have had to admit they had their heads up their asses the whole decade of the '80s. It just got written out of history. I wanted to write it back in. Like a lot of people in this memoir-ridden age, I unfortunately suffered from the delusion that my experiences were all wonderful and important, and the first incarnation of my book was basically a memoir. I got some feedback pointing that out, and set out to change it into more of a history. By the time I was done I'd turned it into mainly a history, with my personal experiences reduced to the minimum required to link all the history together and tell a story. I think passion is a wonderful thing, and people relate to it in almost any field. It's what punk rock was about so much to me, the desperate passion of it. As long as you bring some thoughtfulness and good perspective and accuracy to match your passion, people tend to respond to it really well. It only came out now because I couldn't afford to start my own press and publish it until 2005. The basic book was done in 2001, though I did an enormous amount of work on it in the intervening years.

MRR: I believe the book took you six years to complete, yeah? You ever get to a stage where you said, "Ahhh fuck it," and thought about canning the whole project? During the book's writing, what was the biggest adversity you faced?



George: I only came about my DIY passion belatedly, through experience. I did the mainstream route in 2001, got an agent, impressed clueless editors that I was an authority, and nearly got a big publishing deal for it. Right at that time, Sept. 11 happened and the book industry was only interested in books called *I Salute the Flag and Piss on Osama* after that. I had already been unsure about promoting the DIY way of life while going with a major press, and my experience of the publishing industry only confirmed my suspicions that monkeys were now in positions as editors at many major publishers, and that they would probably make my book much worse by the time they were done with it. I didn't know anything about publishing, so I put it aside in 2002 and thought it might be dead. I worked on other books for the next few years, and learned about publishing and put out a guidebook by myself. Around 2004, I dusted the punk book off and set to work on it again. The biggest problem was that I was a nobody with no credentials in the punk world. That shouldn't have mattered, but so many punks of that era had come to believe in typical hierarchies and status over time, that if I was a writer for some odious mag like *Rolling Stone* they would've been happy to talk to me, but as it was I was too often required to pass some kind of street cred test about whether I'd really been there or knew what I was talking about. It got tiring after awhile. I can understand people need to be careful about what gets credited to them, but it made my job that much harder. The earlier crew and the "icons" of the punk world were the worst about it, whereas the '85-'92 crowd were usually real cooperative.

MRR: How did you research the book, besides having lived through the era documented? You use a mammoth amount of quotes dating from the late '70s to today. Obviously the older ones are taken—and credited—from the likes of *MRR* and *Flipside*. What about the more recent and un-credited ones? Did you obtain those from interviews you conducted yourself?

George: Pretty much anything un-credited is from my own interviews. As time went on and I interviewed more people, I got contacts for other people and I could drop names of people that I'd already interviewed so they knew I was serious. Kenny Inouye from Marginal Man got the ball rolling by sitting down with me in 1998, and I interviewed TSOL while they were touring in 2001, and John Stabb somewhere around then, and then started chasing down people via email ever after that. The internet made the book possible. I logged ungodly hours scouring the web for every ounce of info I could glean out of it for pre-existing information as well as how to find people. I found all my photographers on the web, and they helped me an enormous amount with further contacts. Any photographer who had a website had heard from every band they had shot pictures of, because a lot of guys from old bands were nostalgically trolling the web for some evidence they had ever existed. In the end, it was as much a product of the national punk community as it was my own doing—so many people played key roles in making it the book it became. I inherited most of my great old zine collection from a good friend and *Banned In DC* photographer who lent the zines to me.

MRR: Did anyone prove to be rather hesitant about being quoted in the book, or just prove to be totally uncooperative on any and every level? C'mon George, name the assholes!!

George: Dischord acted a little like they were guarding Fort Knox when I tried to get a hold of Jeff Nelson through them. Falling James from the Leaving Trains said he'd rather not be in it if I didn't tell the whole story as he saw fit, which he never allotted the time for, so I just used the little I had. Keith Morris was very suspicious at first, but that was because I cold-called him while he was giving himself his insulin shots, and he warmed up once I passed the street cred test. Most major guys, like Henry Rollins, Ian McKaye, Steve Albini, etc, I didn't even bother with because almost every thought they'd ever uttered had been already recorded somewhere else. Almost everyone else, though, was tremendously cool. Because I was seeking out voices that hadn't been heard from too much before, they were usually real enthusiastic about participating. I rarely sought out people I thought might be a pain in the ass.

Gutless Meanies

MRR: There are certain people who you seem to continually return to throughout the book—John Stabb of Government Issue, Kenny Inouye of Marginal Man and Jack Rabid of *Big Takeover* zine instantly spring to mind. Would the book have been possible without the support of characters such as these?

George: I got the occasional bit of criticism for featuring those guys too heavily, but I thought it important to have some recurrent insightful and entertaining voices in the book. There's not quite as much of those three in the new edition, because I had a bunch of new voices to add, but they're still there throughout. Those three guys were indispensable to me doing the book properly. They were all real supportive, gave me a lot of their time and thoughts, and became great friends and remain so to this day.

MRR: The book is written partly as an autobiography, following US punk with your own development and discovery. Was this always the plan or something that mutated as the book progressed? Personally, I think it provides a great narrative for the book and gives it a genuine, first-hand, personal feel—was that the aim? Has this semi-autobiographical direction of the book lead to any accusations of the book being self-centered or egotistical?

George: Oddly, there's been nothing but kudos for the personal narrative. I tried to minimize that, thinking no one cared about most of my experiences, but people responded overwhelmingly well to that. I thought they wanted to read about the bands and the "important" people, but it proved the whole notion that came to be a central part of my book, the "ignore heroes" thing. In punk there wasn't a division between the stage and the audience, and it worked out the same in the book. Fellow punks related to my experiences, because I seemed to hit on a lot of universal issues. As I said earlier, it completely mutated over time from being a memoir into being a diligently researched history with an entertaining narrative. I hate the memoir genre for the most part, because it's so self-indulgent, but I think history is usually far more entertaining when you bring some personal touch and experiences to it to bring it to life. You just have to remember to use your experiences to embellish other material, not to dominate the whole thing.

MRR: How do you personally feel your book stands up to the likes of *American Hardcore*? The book must have received comparisons; do you feel they are justified or unavoidable? What I didn't like about *American Hardcore*, and where *Going Underground* certainly wins out, is the aforementioned narrative rather

than just a list of quotes—has that been a big selling point of the book?

George: The narrative has been a big plus for the book, and telling a story is something I feel strongly about. I did a fair number of interviews while writing the book because I wanted to have my own first-source material, but I saw it as much more important to get the thoughts of what people were thinking at the time rather than their filtered impressions of it now. That's why I depended so heavily on old zine material, to get the spirit of punk rock as it was happening, rather than a jaded or nostalgic look back at it. When I was in touch with Steve Blush before his book came out, he was challenging me on why I was doing a book, and he said, "I've done 95 interviews, how many have you done?" Which just goes to show you can do all the oral history in the world and still put out a bad product if your small attempts to put them in context are horribly flawed. I saw the trend of oral histories with *Please Kill Me* and *American Hardcore* and the like and I got really cynical about them after awhile. I loved the idea of letting the participants do the talking, but I also saw it as a huge cop-out. People were calling themselves authors who were no more than editors. It's hard to even tell a history properly if you only do it through interviews, you have to know when to call bullshit on some accounts, and when to fill in more detail. Like Ian McKaye said about being bummed at his portrayal in Gina Arnold's book *Route 666* as some sort of DC spokesman, he might be as full of shit as the next person. And Ian is about some things as far as DC history; he'd be reticent to admit in a modern interview to some of the things he said and did back then, as well as the behavior of the rest of the early DCHC crew. I have a fair amount of confidence in my writing abilities as a storyteller and as a historian, and I thought it would be a nice change to tell a history as a somewhat cohesive story, rather than just a random collection of interviews.

MRR: The book is published via your own publishing company, Zuo Press yeah? Did you try and push it to any already established publishers such as AK Press or Feral House, or did you want it to remain a 100% DIY project? How many copies did you originally get printed?

George: Once I decided to go indie, there was no question—I was doing it myself. All the bitching that bands used to do against their indie labels not doing enough for them begged the question: why don't you do it yourself then? You don't get royally screwed by an indie the way you do by a major most of the time, but you don't make much money either. If I was going to bother to do the work, I thought I should see the profits. Plus I wanted complete artistic control to do the book exactly how I wanted, and be able to make changes at the last moment. I printed 1000 copies of the first edition. I thought if I ever sold all of them it would be a success. I didn't expect to sell them all in six months. I think my agent put out some feelers to a few indies like Feral House and Soft Skull after the major deals had all fallen through in 2001, but they had their own books they were touting as the gospel and weren't interested in any other punk books. I'm kind of a stickler for good editing, and indie presses are often the same or worse than majors in that regard. Just the fact Blush's book was released with so many inaccuracies is the kind of thing that keeps giving indie press a bad name. I wanted to go about proving that publishing doesn't have to be in other people's hands, that one person can put out a more professional book than a vast amount of what's out there, major or indie. There were a few hiccups in the first edition, but I was pleasantly surprised that people found so few errors in it.

MRR: How have you gone about getting the book distributed and advertised? Have you used a major distributor or has it been done entirely from your house? Has it received worldwide interest or has it been localized to America? How much has the internet aided the success of your book?

George: I've used the usual radical press distributors, like Last Gasp and AK Press. Also Bob Suren at Sound Idea in Florida has been amazing. He's sold as many as anyone, and he's got far fewer distribution channels. In all the time he's been in business, he sold about 20 of any single punk book put out before, including *Get In the Van* and the like. He didn't think anyone read books anymore. In six months he blew through 137 of mine. We were both astounded. I've done a lot of direct sales through my website, but that's tailed off a lot as time has gone on. I wanted to be like Dischord, and really have a lot of direct sales, but it's the kind of thing people find by chance more often than looking for it, and they find it in bookstores or on other websites or something like that. People don't necessarily realize that I am Zuo Press as well, and that they're directly supporting the artist by buying direct. I think it's great to support all indie efforts through buying at indie bookstores and through other indie catalogs, but it's still best to buy direct. It's the great thing about punk rock and running your own press, dealing with people directly, without layers in between. When they email the publisher, they're going right to the source, the guy that wrote the book. I've advertised in *MRR* and *Big Takeover*, and plan to advertise a lot more this

year in zines. There's so much more value in advertising in punk zines than in anything else, and I'm going right to my core audience. I'd like to get it out to people who dropped out of punk long ago, who would still enjoy it, but that's more of a word of mouth thing to reach those folks. The internet has been everything to the success of my book, through blogs like *The Punk Vault*—because lots of people respect Vinikour's opinions—and all kinds of other websites and blogs of my photographers like Marie and chicagopunkpix.com. Through *MRR* and the internet, the book has gotten interest all over the world. I've sold to Germany, Sweden, the UK, Netherlands, Finland, Russia, Italy, Portugal, France, Poland, Japan, Australia, Denmark, and a few other countries.

MRR: There are a few things in the book I would like you to expand on if you will. Firstly, being a Brit myself, I was interested in the chapter, "Emptying The Madhouse." It opens with the clear claim that early '80s UK punk was, "in a sad state of affairs." Granted, shit like EXPLOITED was no match for DEAD KENNEDYS, BIG BOYS, and BAD BRAINS, but what did you make of DISCHARGE? Surely that band's influence and power has rarely—if ever—been equaled.

George: Pardon my ignorance; I was speaking out of my ass. It was just one of my unsubstantiated biases based on hating all the weekend warrior punks who only liked punk if it was British. I know better now. I never listened to DISCHARGE much, but have come to realize internationally they were one of the most influential bands there was. I talk in the new edition about Finnish Hardcore surfacing independent of US influence, at the same time, because they listened to DISCHARGE and wanted to play even faster. Plenty of bands in the US were influenced some by DISCHARGE as well.

MRR: It states a lot of the "fashion punks" came out only when the UK bands came over. Could that not be the paradox of "the grass is always greener on the other side?" To us Brits, the allure of a US band always seems greater

than homegrown talent. Do you not think this is still the case?

George: That's exactly the case. People always take their own talent for granted. I had no idea punks all over the world would be reading my book, so I was a little provincial about some things in the first edition, like stupidly slagging off UK punk. I've had to apologize to my UK readers ever since.

MRR: Another paradox the book clearly states is that punk rock is/ was for those who felt alienated and wanted something different from mainstream society, yet ended up conforming to the "popular" or "cool" persona of punk rock. At the start of the "Thank You America" chapter, it's quite clear you went the way of the "individual" wearing—and I quote—"...black leather panties that belonged to an adventurous bisexual acquaintance, a plastic grocery bag, the Gutless Meanies symbol painted on my chest and 'Fuck Me Hard' painted on my shiny bald head." Do you think this form of exhibitionism has been lost as punk rockers themselves have grown more narrow-minded and conservative?

George: Exhibitionism has definitely been lost a lot. Guys like Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys were what punk was meant to be about, just outrageous beyond belief. Gary Floyd, too. The change came with the idiotic notion that hardcore meant toughness, and all these mini-Marines signed up for punk rock. Colour and outrageous fashion came to be derided as new wave or not "hardcore." Everything Stabb said in my book about what the Misfits thought of him and a lot of the other DC crew thought is an example of that. It's a double-edged sword, though, I know there were a lot of people of the '77-'79 era of punk who were into the outrageous punk look who didn't care at all about the music. But there was a conformity of dressing down that came to be accepted with hardcore, sometimes out of lack of imagination or conservatism and other times because people couldn't be bothered making the effort. I certainly became a little more conscious of where I wore my wild clothing after the CBGB skinhead incident.

MRR: As with any book or even compilation album that attempts a broad, sweeping analysis of any genre, there are obviously omissions. How much of your original vision of the book had to be omitted due to space? There are bands that I can instantly think of that barely merited a mention, let alone any kind of in-depth scrutiny: DRI, Jawbreaker, Poison Idea (almost inexcusable in my eyes!), Screeching Weasel. Did you leave anything out of the book that, in hindsight, you feel should have been included?

George: I'm confused. You're saying I should have included those bands? You phrase it as if I did include them and shouldn't have.

MRR: No, it's intended to suggest that those bands should have received much more space than they did.

George: There's a little more about DRI in the new edition, but just as part of the Vats scene in San Francisco. DRI deserves much more, truly, they lost me with the speed metal though and it made me forget how into them I originally was. So much of it came down to what I knew. When something caught my attention that I thought was fascinating, that I'd known nothing about, I worked hard on learning about it. The Big Boys and Dicks are examples, I never listened to either band back then, but they both had great characters and stories. I learned how much punk I was ignorant about doing the book; there was far more I didn't know than there was that I knew. I got a lot of, "You can't write about such and such if you don't mention such and such" in doing the book, but there were a lot of bands that I just couldn't fit in or have any angle to fit in. If they weren't part of my experience, or part of a scene I was writing about, or fit into some important aspect of the DIY culture, they didn't necessarily make the cut. Or I just knew nothing about the bands. I left out tons of deserving bands. Screeching Weasel was a band I never listened to, who I thought had a part in it, but Ben had his own book out and there seemed to be nothing much I could say about them that hadn't been said. Poison Idea and Jawbreaker, again, I know their reputations but they just never crossed my radar. I've asked for help making up for those kind of deficiencies in the new edition, but few people offered me any suggestions or contacts. I have the makings of a good section on the South as far as Raleigh and Richmond with Corrosion Of Conformity, White Cross, Honor Role, the beginnings of Avail, etc. But it didn't make it in this edition because I just didn't know enough to make it interesting and relevant within the context of the rest of the book. I liked the music of some of the bands, but there wasn't anything especially unique about their stories or anything I could grab onto.

Gutless Meanies

MRR: From recollection, and a quick re-reading of your book, it fails to explain why you went to college at Pennsylvania. What did you study and why did you choose PA over one of the more recognized punk hot spots—New York, DC, or L.A. for example?

George: I didn't mention it because the reasoning was very un-punk and lame. I was set on going to a small college in Oregon, but ended up going to the college I did because my parents had gone there and my sister was there. And it seemed the easier thing to do. punk rock was not an over-riding enough thing in my life to determine where I went to college. I was still half in the punk world and half in the normal career track world when I left high school. I studied engineering, which I never used after college but seemed practical. I've never been a big-city person, so none of the hot spots held any allure.

MRR: The book makes some comments about how punk rock today has become so compartmentalized—pop punk, emo, ska punk, hardcore, metalcore, gutter punk, garage punk, street punk—the list is endless. What to you defines punk rock? Can a punk band exist on a major label—Green Day for example?

George: I think Jimmy Alvarado from *Razorcake* put it pretty well to me—he said it came down to five words for him: "question everything, blindly accept nothing." Punk photographer Geoff Cordner also got me thinking a lot about it, and some of the themes are talked about in the new edition. Cordner suggested punk was an ethos and attitude that created an aesthetic, which is a fancy way of saying that the beliefs created the external representations of punk rock—weird fashion and abrasive music. You have to separate being a punk and "punk rock", because there's often a large disconnect these days. Being a punk is an individual thing, a set of choices about how you live your life. I think what the guys from Nomeansno said in the last chapter of the book reflect my views about it in the '90s and in this decade. Punk rock has

come to be a tag for so many different kinds of music, and the term so institutionalized, that it often has nothing to do with the ethos and attitude anymore, and hasn't for the past 20-25 years, for that matter. It's kind of a useless term now, because it's been appropriated by so many people, so all these sub-labels keep getting used to try to restore meaning to it. Green Day readily admits that calling themselves punk is ridiculous—Mike Dirnt said something about using "punk rock" and "hockey arena" in the same breath is an oxymoron. Musically *American Idiot* is just as good a "punk rock" song as a lot of stuff, and there's even a fair bit of attitude in their criticism of Bush's America, but there's not much ethos in how they lead their lives; it's the life of a conventional rock band. When being a punk was a thumb in the eye of society, like in the '70s, bands could be on major labels and it was more accepted, because punks on the street were hated so much. Now that it's no longer any kind of active revolution, you can play "punk rock" on a major label, but it's awful hard to honestly call yourself punks. If you retain total control of your lives at every level, it's feasible to call themselves punks. But there is no way to do that on a major label.

MRR: I understand the original print of the book has already sold out and the new version has some slight amendments. In what way did the book change from the original print?

George: The new version has more focus on women in punk—Karen from Conflict (US), who was one of the only female hardcore singers of her era who wrote her own lyrics, and Sue from Scrawl, who most people wouldn't call a punk band musically but were punk in the sense that the Minutemen were. They subscribed to the ethos and attitude. A lot of people were turned off by Blush's misogyny in *American Hardcore*. Though hardcore has often been painted a big sausage-fest, and it was in places, there were plenty of gals all over the country who were doing zines, putting on shows, and showing more DIY spirit than the boys getting the credit for it. There's also a way more positive tone taken toward the future of the punk underground, since I'm a lot more educated now than I was when the book first came out. I did a lot of moving around of material to chronologically fit better, so it didn't seem like I was jumping around so much, edited a lot of the excess like most of the aside into Australia, and pared down any material that seemed gratuitous. Plus there's an index, so people can reference it better. I also added a variety of new material in the way of photos and stories.

MRR: Why did you feel it necessary to make these cuts? I particularly enjoyed the Australian chapter; it gave the book and you as the writer a more authoritative perspective as it compared what was going on in the US with that in a culturally similar yet geographically and socially different country.

George: I was only responding to grumblings here about it taking up space in a book about American punk. I don't get rid of all that totally; I talk about going over there and reflecting on punk rock some, just briefly mention seeing the Hard Ons and the Rifles and a bit about them, and mention the influence of American hardcore on the Happy Hate Me Nots. I leave in the Australia material that reflects on what it meant to be a punk at that stage and what punk rock was like elsewhere in the world, I just cut out much of the second hand information on Australian bands of the time, and what my brother referred to as the "what I did on my summer vacation" aspect. I merge it with the "Punks On Film" chapter, since I start that by talking about seeing *Another State of Mind* in Sydney. As one chapter, it works, when it was two chapters back to back it lost the flow of the narrative. I simply wanted to tighten up the book a lot, and I may have gone overboard in some cases, but there's enough added material and so much more material I want to add in the future that it will more than make up for it.

MRR: Prior to the book, you had already written several books, mainly about traveling and skating/boarding. Are you still involved in this form of writing? Did you ever have any formal journalism/writing training? Were you ever involved in fanzine writing? Ever written any fiction?

George: I'm not writing any more guidebooks at the moment, but may do more travel writing in the future, especially if I can get paid to travel. I'm a restless sort, and I pretty much live to experience new things. I have no formal background in writing, just a very good college education where I was able to take many more courses where writing was required than most engineering programs offer. I never did any zines. I have written a lot of fiction, both short stories and a novel, none of which have ever been published. I've honed my craft simply by writing and writing and writing over the years, and endlessly editing and re-writing. Plus I get outside feedback every so often from very bright people who I respect to see if I'm doing a good job.

MRR: Do you make a living from writing, or do you have a day-job?

George: I eke out a living at the moment from writing, but just barely. I'm concentrating all my time on writing and video projects for the next year to try to make it unnecessary to go back to being a wage slave. I also do some creative financial stuff I call "plastic gangster-ism" which has helped me get by the last few years. It all started when I won $5000 from a credit card company by writing a 250-word story on how they had helped my business grow. My business was a name only, but I'm a good enough writer and knew my downhill skating video project I was filming at the time would sound exciting, so I won the grand prize. I then figured out ways to get zero percent loans and advances off of credit cards, and started juggling those loans and investing it on a grand scale. It all went completely against the grain of what you're told to do regarding credit cards, but it was kinda the contrarian punk rock approach. Make the system work for you. It's so stupid because they can care less if you have a real job or not, it's all in your credit rating. The more I borrowed, the more offers I got.

MRR: While writing *Going Underground*, did you have any routine that you adhered to? Did you spend a set amount of time per day working on it? When I interviewed Winston Smith and Charles Romalotti, they both had preferred times of the day during which to work—is that the same case yourself?

George: No set routine at all. Months of inactivity, then periods of working 24/7. Completely random. I got the entire Cincinnati chapter done while in Panama for a couple of weeks living in a cheap hostel. There was free wireless floating through the air from neighboring businesses, so I could do research and email people any time of day or night.

MRR: You were also in a band, Gutless Meanies. Tell us a bit about the band. What gave you greater satisfaction—playing in a band or completing a (any) book/ article? From my time in bands, I always felt more of a fan than a performer, getting much more pleasure from seeing/writing about a band than performing in one. Is this something that you agree with?

George: I was in two bands, both of which largely got written out of the final version of the book because I thought we were just another couple of bands that never played out much at all and were not worthy of talking about. The first, the Gutless Meanies, was a straight-up punk band, and the second, the Stomping Yobbos, was an eclectic punk-based band that veered off into folk, industrial, reggae, pop, and whatever else caught our fancy at a moment's notice. I actually think both bands had a lot of good songs and regret that we never recorded any of them very well. I loved writing a good song and getting it right for the first time in practice. I loved putting on a show, and disturbing people, and dressing up as oddly as possible. There was always a lot of satisfaction in that, a lot of catharsis. But none of being in a band ever compared to seeing my favorite bands. I was always foremost a fan. Completing a book on my own press has a huge amount of satisfaction when I get the finished product from the printer. Just to be able to stare at it and say, wow, I did all that, me. It's such a different feeling from being in a band, though, I don't know how to compare the two. Being in a band was so much more emotional, the human relationships involved. I put so much more of my emotions into being in a band than I usually do with anything else.

MRR: You're also the force behind www.bushistorture.com I've read and heard from a lot of people who lived through the Reagan years say that Bush is worse than Reagan was. You obviously agree and even state that in your book, which also states your almost pathological hatred of Reagan. Where do you intend taking that website; at present it seems quite basic. Are you planning on putting articles and more information on it?

George: It's kind of faded into the background. I wanted to sell shirts and raise some money for some causes with it, but it's never caught anyone's attention. I

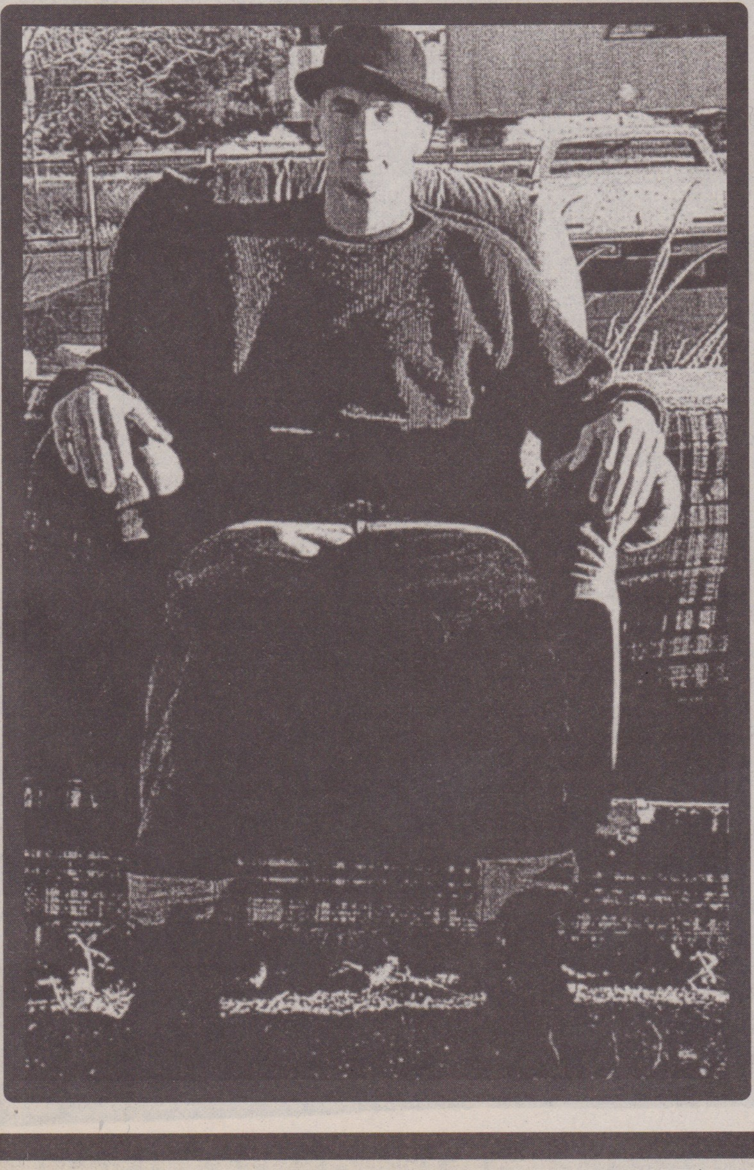
just give away stickers now for the most part. The funniest thing about it is I got offers to be in Iran's "Golden Key" book of business listings. I don't know if someone in Iran does searches for businesses with names that included "Bush" and "Torture" in the title or what. Bush is worse than Reagan was, because he's far more of a dunce, yet has succeeded against all logic in his ability to sell himself to the American people. You just wonder how long he can keep telling outrageous lies and remain in power, but half of America's ability to delude themselves into believing "night is day" keeps him there.

MRR: The Zuo Press website mentions the floods in New Orleans, albeit via one of your friends who is now rendered homeless. What did you think of the slow reaction of the Bush Administration in providing any form of aid? In Florida, being brother Jeb's state, did you notice any quicker or more efficient aid-response in the wake of the state's hurricane damage?

George: Florida has not had as calamitous a hurricane affecting as many people, but on a smaller scale things are the same. Poor black communities in some cities have seen virtually nothing of FEMA, whereas people in Miami collected tens of millions of dollars for a hurricane that didn't even come close to them. Bureaucracies jump when they're told to, and no one tells them to jump for poor people or regions considered politically or financially unimportant.

MRR: As a writer, what are your views on censorship? Is censorship something that is required once a certain extreme has been reached or does it have no place in an art that should not be compromised?

George: I'm not as impassioned as I probably should be about censorship as a writer, but I certainly loathe it. I'm not sure Jello Biafra should have spent so much time fighting the Parental Music Resource Council and their attempts to label albums with ratings, because all the PMRC succeeded in doing was clue people in to who the controversial artists were and make kids buy more of their albums than ever. But it is sick what the FCC is doing to radio across the country. Howard Stern has a good point that Oprah is talking about sex acts like "tossing the salad" and doesn't get fined but he does for way more innocuous stuff. The greatest problem in America has always been self-censorship, though, far more than government censorship. Journalists put their fingers to the wind to see whether they dare buck the trend of what people want to hear. After Sept.11, it was repulsive.



MRR: The book states you moved to Oakland in 1991. What took you there? You are now back living in Florida? Why did you return to your home state? Would George Hurchalla have been a different man had he grown up in the punk rock hotbeds of L.A., DC, or New York?

George: I started trying to work my way around the world in 1990, spent most of 1991 in Australia, and came back to the US in the fall of '91 and started living in Oakland cause it was the first place I ended up on the mainland. I couldn't find a decent job, so when a friend told me he was moving to the mountains to Lake Tahoe, I joined him. That pretty much isolated me from going to shows much anymore, though I went down to San Francisco a fair bit for the next couple of years to see bands. Eventually I stopped leaving the mountains that much anymore, though, and lost track of what was going on in the underground scene. I ended up in Florida with my folks after I got sick of struggling as a photographer in Tahoe and wanted to get back to writing again. I live in North Carolina now, where I moved to last year. I'm sure I'd be different in some ways if I'd lived in those cities, just because the environment would have shaped me differently. But I've always had this overwhelmingly strong sense of who I am, so as a person I probably wouldn't be too much different.

MRR: What are the future plans for George Hurchalla? Are you going to do a follow-up to *Going Underground*? The foreword of the book suggests that this is just Vol. I of a work in progress—is that correct? Where do you intend taking the series from here?

George: There will be other books by me, but I don't know whether I'll write any more on punk rock. *Going Underground* will probably keep growing as a book, but the personal narrative dictates that it has to remain as one book. I don't plan to do a series expounding on that material. I'd like to release a series of punk photo books, like *Banned in DC*, but for some of the great, less-known scenes like Texas and elsewhere. There's also a book of my own black and white photography planned for the future. With Zuo Press, I'd also like to release autobiographies of some real interesting icons like Gary Floyd, Jack Grisham, and John Stabb.

MRR: Lastly, what are your predictions for, and what would you like to see happen to, punk rock as we progress through the 21st Century?

George: I've got no predictions. It's up to the kids of each generation to make it happen. I'd like to see people continue to be radical and creative and unpredictable, regardless of what it's called.

MRR: Anything you want to add?

George: I'd like to see young punks not dwell much on the past, take what was great about it and build something new. Live your life with total commitment and passion, and originality will flow out of that. I was just a fan who decided one day I wanted to write a book. I didn't know anyone from back then or have access to them, I didn't know anything about publishing, but I wanted to set an example that others could follow. We can control our own media, and like the Big Boys said, if you don't like us, start your own band. Or do your own zine. Or write your own book.

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FIGHT FOR PEACE

The ICON AD Story

by Lance Hahn

Icon were one of the ten or so bands off the first Bullshit Detector comp to survive long enough to release a couple of the their own records. With the memorably catchy "Cancer," the band managed to make the most of a pretty poorly recorded practice tape.

Started by Craig "C#" Weir, the original inspiration was his neighborhood friend, Shonna. Having introduced Craig to the first wave of punk, Shonna himself went on to found the pivotal second wave band, Abrasive Wheels. By 1978, Craig had his first guitar and was totally absorbed into punk rock.

The first incarnation of the band was Icon. With schoolmates Mark Holmes, Phil Smith and "Dicky" Watson, the group went through several names (The Jackets, Terminal Boredom) before settling on a song title from the Siouxsie and the Banshees album Join Hands.

Even as young teens, the band was eventually able to get gigs outside of their town. The more gigs, the quicker their musical education and by the time they got in touch with Crass, they were a fairly tight punk band.

Drummer Mark was the one interested in politics at the time and sent off their practice tape to Crass. The result was the inclusion of "Cancer" on the 1980 Bullshit Detector compilation. With a song in many ways atypical for Crass, its lyrics naiveté is almost metaphorical and surreal.

I can almost taste it
It's getting so close
There's no need to waste it
It's only a growth
Will paracitomal kill the parasites?
Or are they ready to kill themselves

But the following year, when school finished, the four essentially drifted apart effectively breaking up the group. But in the subsequent year, Craig had written some songs that he decided to record. Employing the aid of Mark on drums, they recorded some tracks with Mark's wife and her sister on vocals.

Timing is everything and simultaneous to this happening, Radical Change, the label run by the Disrupters, were looking to release some other groups. With both bands being on the Bullshit Detector comp, things started to fall into place.

On a whim, Craig had sent over the demo and Steve of the Disrupters dug it.

Steve: "I loved their track "Cancer" on the 1st Bullshit Detector LP and I contacted them to ask if they had any more stuff out. They sent me a great demo so I offered to release it for them. They were a cool band I think, very underrated."

With the other two original Icon members uninterested or unable to reform, the group carried on with Marks' wife, Bev adding Roger Turnbull on bass. The band was resurrected as Icon AD just in time for the release of their debut record, "Don't Feed Us Shit."

Craig: "The first title was taken from the chorus line of our first proper recording, 'Cancer,' and was a fierce two fingers up to the government/anyone who lied and rammed bullshit down our throats, and who we felt were eating our lives away and destroying our freedom. (Quite ironic that it ended up on a compilation called Bullshit Detector?)"

The four-track EP was an especially melodic affair not too unlike what groups like Shelley's Children would be doing a few years later but with a serious inclination towards Stiff Little Fingers (especially on the second song "What's Your Name"). The sweet vocals and chiming guitars make for a criminally underrated record.

The record was an indie success and the group were soon asked to their one and only Peel Session. They concluded that four song set with a great updated version of "Cancer."

The only other proper recording of Icon AD was the follow-up EP, Let The Vultures Fly also on Radical Change. With a more rock edge and bigger production, the group still maintained their political edge along with less obvious, but equally wonderful vocal melodies.

Craig: "The meaning of 'Let the Vulture fly, was our way of saying no!, stand up for what you believe in, a plea for peace, an anti-war message, saying no to senseless killing which we considered to be 'legal murder' authorized by selfish leaders of countries."

Even the cover art had evolved. The one-legged, peace symbol guy with the rifle for an arm was replaced with a spiky top with a circle A on his face.

But despite the anarcho imagery, Radical Change's distributor and manufacturer, Backs, was certain that Icon AD could make a go of it as a commercial pop act. The label wanted to release a new EP with a glossy cover. The band flat out refused and the third record was never released.

Soon after, the group split up again for good. Ironically, Craig's teenage son now plays in a new punk band.

DOMINANT PATRI

By Lance Hahn

For the short time that they were around in 1982, Dominant Patri was a powerful quintet of politicized punk born out of the urge to do something in Luton.

Steve in *Nation On Fire* fanzine #5: "The reason we formed was no reason at all. There was just a few people who wanted to start a group. At the start we had a different guitarist but we didn't even have a practice with him."

The name was selected as a reaction to Christianity's stranglehold on Western power.

Steve in *Nation On Fire* fanzine #5: "The name means 'dominant fortler' and comes from the Latin 'Inomine Patri' meaning our father which comes from the Church. And that is the reason we picked the name 'Dominant Patri' because we all consider the Church as a dominant and corrupt part of our society!"

Eroded Freedom fanzine: "The name says how the Pope, Priests, and Bishops dominate the people's minds while they are at school."

Musically, they were more along the lines of earlier punk bands, avoiding the new movement towards hardcore and thrash.

Steve in *Nation On Fire* fanzine #5: "We tried our hardest to make up tuneful songs and basically were not that keen on thrash bands."

From day one, the band was trying to avoid being typecast. Despite having close connections to other Luton peace punks like Karma Sutra, they went out of their way to avoid being labeled and anarchist band.

Steve in *Nation On Fire* fanzine #5: "We never actually labeled the group ourselves but locally we were labeled as a Crass/Mob/Dirt type group."

Eroded Freedom fanzine: "They are not an anarchist band but believe there is a lot of shit involved in the society we live in. They do not want to be labeled.

"...They want people to accept them for what they are without any pre-conceptions. They are worth seeing which isn't too difficult as they often gig around Luton."

Together for less than a year, that would only turn into a handful of gigs few were lucky enough to catch.

Steve in *Nation On Fire* fanzine #5, "I don't know how many gigs we had done. Somewhere between 10 and 15 and the gig that I enjoyed most was the first gig, which was at a local wine bar."

Fronted by two vocalists, Chris and Kate, the band were an affront to sexist stereotypes about women as musicians and how to act on stage. It was a point they would make clear in their statements if not necessarily in their lyrical content.

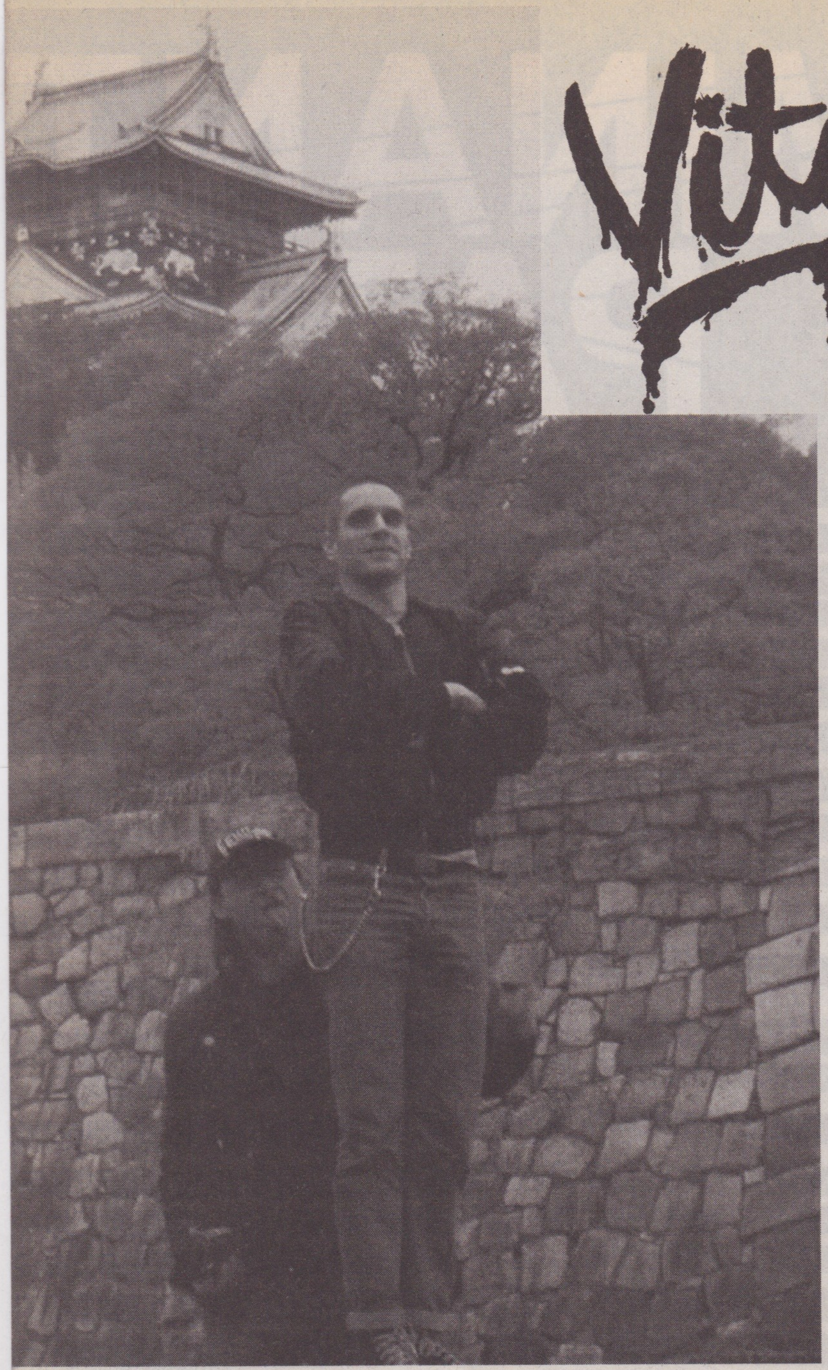
Eroded Freedom fanzine, "Having two singers, Kate and Chris, makes their music more original and entertaining. Kate would like to stress that she is not a token female but actually a complete member of the band and all decisions concerning the band are made jointly."

Steve in *Nation On Fire* fanzine #5, "No not really. We didn't sing about feminism. Most of our songs are about more everyday things and by that I don't mean to say that I dislike the feminist movement. I admire what they are fighting for because women have been oppressed for too long. The songs we sang were more about the press, war and the way people are treated in the system. Oh shit! I've just fucked the question. We must have sung about feminism. Sorry!!!"

Having only ever recorded a three-song demo, the band was done within a year with the various members moving on. By the following year, they were already looking back on the band with nostalgia.

Steve in *Nation On Fire* fanzine #5, "...Anarchy is quite a hard subject to comment on. I think its more a state of mind than politics. Peace, well yes of course we're for it as there's too much suffering in the world."

Vitamin X



VITAMIN X SE ASIAN/PACIFIC TOUR NOVEMBER 2005

Tour report by Marc, Marko, and (through the eyes of) Alex

In November of 2005 Vitamin X went on a four-week tour of SE Asia, which included Japan, Australia, Singapore, The Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. This is the story of what happened on that tour. Of course, we've left out irrelevant, uninteresting stuff like trashing hotel rooms, wild orgies, drunken madness, etc…

Having toured everywhere in Europe, the US, Japan, and Brazil we started asking ourselves, 'Where else in the world haven't we played yet? Where do we go from here?' We decided it was time to paraphrase a classic and 'Turn things up to 11.' For fun we'd tell people we wanted to tour Micronesia, but not long after we actually started getting emails from people offering us contacts in Micronesia, again proving that hardcore punk is everywhere. We ended up doing a tour of Japan, Australia, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Micronesia didn't fit in our schedule so that'll have to happen next time). This tour had to be done in a period of around four weeks, because after having already played around 50 shows that year, it was absolutely unthinkable for our quantum-physics-scientist aka uni-brow bass player Alex to get any more free days. Not to mention the problems we faced with our drummer (but more about this later).

Our friends in Japan 'Bosu' (Boss), Yoshida-San, and Naoki were happy to organize another tour for us. They warned us that the Japanese scene was in a decline since our last visit (no causal effect here I hope), but still thought we'd do OK considering our first tour was such a success. Organizing a Japanese tour takes a much longer period of preparation then anywhere else in the world. In Japan, everything works on a much stricter, more professional level. Venues have to be booked and paid months in advance, famous Japcore bands need to be added to the line-up, and the whole shebang needs to be very well promoted. These things are extremely important, otherwise you'll be playing in front of six people and your Japan tour will fail miserably.

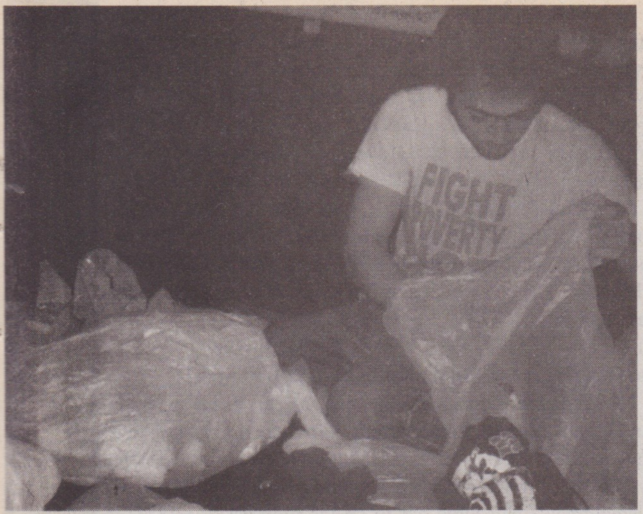
We'd heard some good stories about Australia (Rambo *MRR* tour report), but almost no foreign bands tour this country so we didn't really know what to expect Emily, who organized the Rambo tour, was not in the country. Some guys from the Sydney band Anarchoi mailed us that they would be stoked to help us out. We didn't want to play only weekends like Rambo did because of our time limit We needed to squeeze in as many shows in our stay as possible, so we could cover our costs and visit many places.

For years we have had a lot of contacts in SE Asia and several of our recordings were released on local labels (mainly on cassettes) in Indonesia and Malaysia. When we informed everybody about this tour total madness broke out; zillions of people started writing us, and everybody had some proposal or wanted us to play in their own little city, chalet, or island. We chose the persons who, in our opinion, were the most serious and organized and the lucky winners were: Ari and Ega in Jakarta, Indonesia; Bob and Hisham in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Butch in Manila, Philippines and our all time favorite Shaiful in Singapore. For extra promotion and financial help for the tour we decided to let Malaysian, Philipino, and Singapore labels put out some sort of 'best of' VX CD. That felt a little awkward, because you mostly see these CDs for bands that have been dead a while. Maybe we are dead and roam this world as zombies...

Some of the SE Asian organizers thought our schedule was too tight. We had told them that after our Japanese and Australian leg of the tour we wanted to play four shows, in four countries (three of them being islands), in four days, which also automatically meant four flights. 'This is logistically and realistically impossible, you guys are crazy, you need to change the schedule,' they replied. But we kindly told our Asian hosts it was our way or the highway...

Mauricio Alves Fernandez aka *baterista brasileiro* Boka of legendary Brazilian punks Ratos de Porao and I Shot Cyrus, ended up drumming on this tour. Our drummer Wim couldn't come because of commitments and work. Boka had mentioned during our Brazilian 2003 tour (which he organized), that if we ever needed a drummer for a Japanese tour, he'd be into it. So we asked him, and it turned out it

that he was already planning to tour Europe with I Shot Cyrus together with Discarga, a tour that would end one week before our first Japanese show. We



agreed to combine those two tours with some free days in between to practice the songs with him. In the end he was on the road for ten weeks straight, because he is one hardcore motherfucker. We also managed to play one show in Germany with Boka, avoiding having to play our first show with him in front of a savage Japanese audience.

One month before the tour we recorded a new EP called *Rip It Out* to bring with us. The Japanese tour of 2003 turned out to be amazing—the shows were great and we managed to sell around 300 T-shirts and a shit-load of other merch in about twelve shows. So we decided to bring even more merch this time. This is where our story starts—ahead of us were 21 shows in 25 days and 11 flights, accompanied by 400 T-shirts, 70 sweaters, 600 buttons, 800 stickers, 300 patches, 150 CDs, 210 vinyls, and four tooth-brushes.

Wed November 2, Amsterdam – London – Tokyo

The floor of the check-in hall of Schiphol Amsterdam Airport is covered with T-shirts and other kinds of merch. We're still busy dividing and hiding T-shirts, everybody's putting on two sweaters, and Marko, being the singer and the only person without an instrument, fills his bomber jacket with CDs, patches and buttons.

Overseas DIY touring means you somehow have to get past customs without problems. Not being Metallica means we don't have the time nor money to apply for working permits and all other kinds of official forms/papers. But this does mean that if they find out you're a touring band, playing shows and selling merch, you'll be sent straight back, which actually has happened to a lot of bands in the past. So, in theory, we should only bring as little as possible: one guitar, one bass, one snare and almost no personal stuff and almost no merch. Felix Havoc had already sent our new EP, and most of our other releases, for us to pick up in Tokyo. But sending 400 T-shirts and the other merch to Japan would cost us too much, so we decided to bring them ourselves.

The days before the tour were stressful, and consisted of practicing with our fill-in drummer Boka, finishing ironing on patches, preparing buttons, and dividing merch. Marko told me to turn my share of shirts inside out, so the customs won't notice if they look inside my bag. Later, I turned out to be the only moron to turn all my shirts inside out, while the rest of the band laughed at my expense. Each person is allowed to check-in 25 kilos but my share of merch was already 27 kilos and I hadn't even put in any socks or undies, let alone my bass. We end up having around 50 kilos each, so we put as much heavy stuff as we could into our hand luggage. Our smooth talking guitarist Marc, infamous for his charm, dealt with the luggage girls and somehow we got through the check-in without paying any extra.

Day 1, Tokyo, Japan @ Wall: Bow and bang your head

After a sixteen-hour flight we pass Japanese customs easily but a Japanese official starts bowing and tells honourable visitor Marc that his bag is still in London, and will be delivered in two days. This is an 'intolerable' situation and they give him $80. Marko also wants to make some easy money so he tells the poor guy his bag is damaged (which is actually true, one of the wheels broke because of the insane amount of merch he was carrying) and they immediately hand him 50 bucks. We just entered the country and already we've started making money! Way to go!

We are picked up by the tour organiser Yoshida and our host David, who we will stay with for most of out time in Japan. David's a French-Canadian and, unlike most foreign people in Japan, he's not an English teacher. He also sings in Japcore band Everybody's Enemy. People like David, who know Japanese culture and language are a necessity for stupid bums like us; without him we'd probably still be wandering around somewhere in Japan trying to find our way back home (streets have no names in Japan, and we still don't understand how people find their way). Or even worse, we'd be in jail for having unintentionally offended or insulted somebody.

It's barely noon but we drive straight to club Wall, situated in the Hatsudai part of Tokyo, where they are waiting for us to sound check. In Japan everybody expects the bands to show up around 2 pm for sound check. Being used to either not sound checking, or doing it in the evening just before the show, this is pretty weird for us. But this is how things are done in Japan, and you do what you're told because you really don't want to offend anybody, especially not in Japan, right? To show respect you bow. So for fun we bow on the street to the people passing by, and guess what...everybody bows back. That must be the reason why the Japanese are such good headbangers, I mean they practice those muscles from birth! After the sound check we go to David's place and spend another two or three hours reorganising merchandise and seeing our new *Rip It Out* 7's for the first time because Felix Havoc sent them straight to Japan after pressing them.

Wall is packed with people this evening and it's great meeting a lot of our friends from two years ago. In Japan you always play with great, mind-blowing bands, known or unknown, new or old, it doesn't matter: they all kick ass, know how to play their instruments, and have a stage presence to bow to. Japanese bands are hard acts to follow; you have to be even better, meaner, faster, and funnier.

Today's line up features Yakara, the new band from Yoshida.

CRUCIAL SECTION

Great, fast Japcore with some US '80s hardcore influences and amazing solo's from Yoshida himself. Next two bands are No All and Assfort, two bands with a long history in the scene. Halfway through Assfort's set me and Boka go backstage to run through the set list one more time, while watching Assfort over a TV connected to a camera. When we get on stage I'm afraid we are going to suck because of the jetlag, but when we see the crowd the adrenalin starts pumping and all hell breaks lose! Everybody's singing along, stage diving, and circle pitting! A great way to start this tour!

Day 2, Sendai @ Birdland: Chopstick drumming

After those damn busy pre-tour sleepless days of stress and jetlag, David has a hard time waking us. We drive to Sendai, a few hours from Tokyo, where we arrive late in the afternoon. Boka tries to eat with chopsticks for the first time, his drumming will never be the same again. This is also probably why Japanese bands have such good drummers, these kids work the sticks since the age of 3! During the drive we learn some essential Japanese words; the most important ones being *sumimasen* (sorry/excuse me), *ogenki desu ka* (how are you), *konnichiwa* (hello), arigatoo (thank you), *damare chibi* (shut your mouth little one), and *baka!* (dick).

Sendai is the home of Total Fury and what a great show these cats play. Not only is Total Fury amazing, but all 5 bands this evening are total blasts of great, tight hardcore; Back Stab with the ex-guitarist of Total Fury who fucking rocks, Attempt from Osaka, The Stride from Morioka, and locals Make Mention Of Sign… I'm really starting to worry that the people are going to be to tired for our set…but I am so fucking wrong. This show is wild as fuck, with kids doing back flips, pile-ons, etc. It's a miracle no necks were broken.

Selling your merch in Japan is an experience in itself. There are certain rules which you have to follow. For example, you can't price your t-shirts too cheap because if you do, you won't sell any (as opposed to selling merch in Holland, where the cheaper it is, the more you sell). Also it is important that you *invite* people to buy your stuff. After the show we slept at the home of another American English teacher.

Day 3, Yokosuka @ Pumpkin: Fried grasshoppers, pickled horseradish roots and drunk sailors

Our usual plan of waking up early so we can go see some big Buddha statue doesn't work out. We wake up too late, argue for another hour about whether or not we have time to see this big Buddha. David—who is in charge—finally says no, and we get into the van to drive to Yokosuka.

Normally you don't see so many Western people on the streets of Japan but Yokosuka is a different story. There is a big US marine base and US cops in US army trucks are slowly driving through the streets searching for drunk sailors. All the clubs have US bouncers and there is US food everywhere. Now we are totally culture-shocked.

You can buy anything you want in Japan except for one thing; it's easier to find an original Gauze LP than vegetarian food. Probably it was even harder for us because we don't understand the language and are not able to read the symbols on the food, which are all in Japanese. Also, they seem to put fish ingredients in almost everything, sometimes even in plain rice. So as a vegetarian you basically survive with raw tofu, plain rice and soy sauce and if you're lucky you'll find an Indian restaurant. There are also many types of food which I have never seen anywhere else. Like fried grasshoppers, pickled horseradish roots and even flowers. Seeing all this western US food around, Marko and me decide to get some burritos. I'm not sure what kind of fish they put in the beans for us, but it sure as hell is swimming really fast through my bowels, and comes out just before we hit the stage. The show is lots of fun, with some amazing bands like Scum Banditz.

Day four, Kumagaya @ Budoukan2: Live at Budokan!

When Marc hears we're playing at a place called Budokan he goes bananas. According to him there are a shitload of '70s bands (Cheap Trick, Ozzy, etc) that have live albums called *Live at Budokan*. Probably that's some other Budokan but still we ask the soundman (who turns out to be the guitarist of GISM) to record the show. Most venues in Japan have recording equipment installed and often bands get an audio recording, and sometimes even a video recording.

Before the show we spend at least an hour walking around trying to find a place to eat. But we are in Twilight Zone and there are only massage parlors around. Although my neck is giving me trouble after the last shows, I chicken out and don't go to the massage parlor that has a waitress theme.

The line up this time is grind band Little Bastards, local youth crew heroes Count Of Strength, and melodic punks Sobut. Despite some technical problems, the show tonight is pretty good. After the show we sign some autographs and Marc even has to sign a guitar of one of the opening bands.

This show has an unpleasant surprise for us. Just as we are about to leave we walk over to the organizer to get the money. There is, however, no money. It turns out that after having to switch this show with the Sendai show, the organizer had to pay rent for two clubs. So all the money from the door went to paying two clubs and we couldn't do much about it. This spoils our state of mind for a couple of days, as we go through all the doom scenarios for the rest of the tour. Fortunately things even out.

Day 5, Koiwa @ eM Seven: Businessmen going crazy

Audiences in Japan can be very funny. The everyday life of the Japanese seems to be very controlled, self disciplined, calm and sober, but during a hardcore show they burst out of their cocoon and go totally berserk. It seems as if all the rage and anger comes out. Some kids come to the shows straight from work. Even businessmen who by day rule their companies attend shows. So today we get two guys looking like businessmen, fully dressed in suits and carrying fancy suitcases. Two years ago one of these business men got undressed and jumped naked from the stage.

EM Seven, situated in the eastern part of Tokyo called Koiwa, is totally packed. There is no place to move at all, and dealing with merch is very difficult. People are constantly pushing from all sides, things are falling from the table, and for David and Marko (who are taking care of merch that night) it feels like being on a battlefield with the enemy striking all the time. They manage to sell an incredible amount of t-shirts and our spirits are lifted after the no-payment fiasco.

The line-up is great, containing some really

cool local bands like Deep Slauter, Chakkamen, Spy Master (sounding like Boston's Jerry's Kids), Make No Sense, and This Age. Every band is really tight and energetic and the crowd eats it up. Before it's our turn, David comes backstage to tell us that the 'Glen E. Friedman of Japan' has just come in and told David he has the assignment to shoot us for some big magazine. Being a big fan of Glen's photography, the mention of his name makes me nervous. When we hit the stage it's total madness, stage diving all over the place, sing-a-longs and circle pits, and we even manage to make a wall of death for one song.

Day 6, Day off: Consume or be consumed!

What do you do on a free day (or should I say, during every free moment?) in Japan? Consume! Japan turns everybody into a consumption monster. You can buy anything you want, anything you need and everything you don't need. Everywhere you look there are shops full of electronics, old vinyl records, clothes, toys, and more. And to make things worse, the custom is that on the streets, and in all the stores the staff are 'asking' you to buy stuff (well, actually it's a cross between ordering you and begging). In high-pitched voices, you get the '*irashaima se, irashaima se,* won't you please buy something' in Japanese every five seconds in your ear. In all stores they bow and run to get you your product. To Boka this all seems pretty weird, in Brazil nobody runs or bows he says. Besides being able to reproduce '*irashaima se*' for the rest of our life, we do purchase a lot today. Marc buys a shitload of obscure '70s rock records (too many to carry so he has to ship them back to Amsterdam), I go out and find original vintage '80s shoes and second hand clothes, Marko finds Gauze and Lip Cream records for reasonable prices, and Boka buys records and a kimono for his wife. We also visit the tallest building of Tokyo, Government Building Number One where we can even spot Mt. Fuji.

Around midnight we leave for Hiroshima, accompanied by Ichiro (from NK6, and part-time Gauze member) and the Rasta-haired "Noguso-Tarezou" (meaning "he shits on streets," we never found out how he got that nickname) who's also the drummer of Endzweck. Neither of them speak very good English, so this causes some funny situations. We teach them some important Dutch words like "*neuken*" (to fuck), which they pronounce as 'neukineuki', and they teach us even more important Japanese words like "*ii nioi shimasu*" (you smell nice). When we drive off, we ask if they have some classic rock to play on the road. After a long discussion they stop and the driver runs off, without saying anything. We ask Ichiro and he explains that we have stopped at the house of our driver. He went off to pick-up/download some rock (ACDC, Sabbath, etc) onto his Ipod to play for us. Sometimes Japanese people are just too nice.

Day 7, Hiroshima @ Neo-Polis Hall: Eat shrimps and drink till you pass out

After a 14-hour night drive with almost no sleep, we arrive in Hiroshima. Following the usual early sound check we visit the atomic bomb site memorial park, which is very impressive. By means of pictures, artifacts and buildings we are reminded of the horror that nuclear weapons are. We sign the book for complete nuclear disarmament and proceed back to the show.

The show itself is at the Neo-Polis Hall, where we also played two years ago, and the line-up contains a few kick ass local Japcore bands: A Peace Of Shit, Origin Of M, The Abducted and those crazy thrash maniacs Freaks from Tokyo who ripped everything that night. Our show is pretty good, even better than last time we played here.

After the show we're dead tired (as we did not sleep for almost 24 hours) but we are invited to a Japanese after-party. For people who have never heard of this before, this means that you go to a restaurant with the organizers and other bands. Then you eat and drink till you pass out. Even though we're not in the mood, it's impossible and impolite to refuse this invitation, so the rest of the night we watch our Japanese friends getting drunk and eating shrimp.

Day 8, Kobe @ Blue Port: I Scream Seven Showers

Playing in Japan brings out the rock star in you. You're playing on the best equipment, every venue—even the smaller ones—has a sound man, the audiences go berserk, and everybody wants your autograph and picture. This especially counts for our guitarist/'70 s rock addict Marc who is regularly starting shows by repeatedly asking the audiences if "they are ready."

Tonight we play with Razors Edge from Osaka, who are pretty big in the Japanese scene, especially after changing their fast thrashy style towards more rock and melody and signing for big deal record label Pizza Of Death records. Razors Edge's show is one big blast of energy and fast tight thrash, it's great! The other bands tonight are great too, especially Milk Coffee and I Scream 7 Showers, a name that starts some discussions among us for the next few weeks. I mean, what the hell does I Scream 7 Showers mean? Anyway, Boka comes to the conclusion that it is some kind of Japanese ritual which contains screaming and then taking 7 showers...who knows, maybe this is really true.

During our show, which is at times pretty wild, somebody passes out. It looks pretty serious, but everybody's laughing and the guy gets carried out as if he is a crowdsurfer. Not two minutes go by and he's standing there again at the front of the stage. I look around worried, but then a circle pit erupts and the guy gets sucked in and I don't see him again.

After the show Marc has an interesting talk with a girl. They are having a not so special conversation, and then in the middle of his sentence s, all of a sudden she says "I-am-23." He says, "OK, cool" and continues talking. And again and again she says, "I-am-23," so he starts wondering what the fuck it means, but still continues on as if nothing happened. Our Japanese drivers later tell us this is a Japanese way of making the conversation more intimate. Marc thus lost today's chance to be a real rock star...

Day 9, Osaka @ Pipe69: Evil-kungfu-master moustache

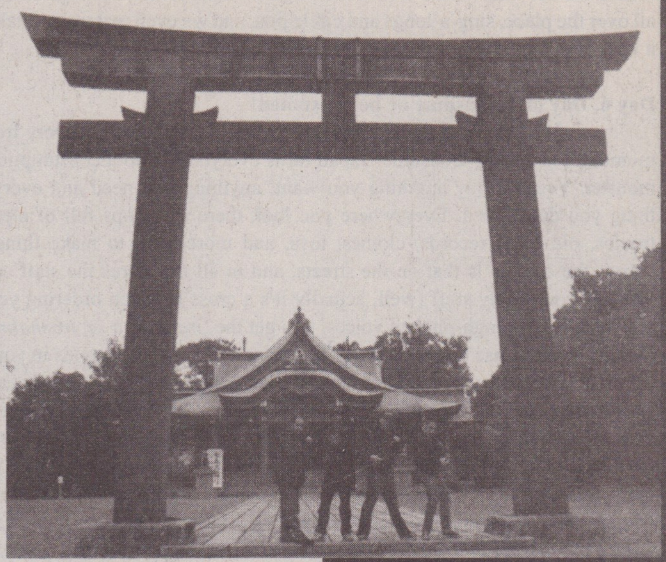
Osaka is the second largest city in Japan after Tokyo but not as expensive or yuppie oriented as Tokyo. We visit the old Osaka Castle and take many samurai pictures. We amaze our hosts by attracting tens of Japanese school kids, who ask us for autographs. Unfortunately they only ask us for autographs, because they need them for some school assignment after asking us some questions about Japan.

Vinyl junkies Marko and Marc spend another couple of hours sweeping the many record stores around the venue before the bands start.

The line-up this time is Anti Justice (w/ ex-members of The Futures and Jellyroll Rockheads), Rough Rock Possessed (great mix of doom and hardcore), Tone Deaf (melodic early '80s hardcore) and good old Crucial Section from Tokyo. I love this band and their looks. They totally have this Heresy/Ripcord '84 kind of look down with all the flannel shirts, bandanas, tight ripped pants, and allstars. And besides that, their drummer always looks like he just woke up, and the guitarist has this amazing evil kung-fu master moustache and beard. This show is definitely cool but Marko has a hard time jumping over the fence in front of the stage, causing some blue balls.

Day 10, Nagoya @ Oys Ohsu: Baterista Boka

It's a Saturday and on the streets of Nagoya *baterista* Boka meets some Brazilian dudes. Since Boka entered the band, suddenly everywhere we play Portuguese-speaking people show up. We are just walking down the streets of some random Japanese town and Brazilians recognize him. Boka is some kind of celebrity in Brazil, his face is on the cover of magazines and RDP have clips on TV. He told us that he got voted as one of the best drummers in the world, between Nicko McBrain (Iron Maiden) and Lars Ulrich (Metallica). Before the show we go to another legendary record shop (or should I say exhibition place). They've got every record you've ever wanted, but it's so expensive that even Felix Havoc would keep his hands in his pocket (or not). The presence of at least four Brazilian countrymen also causes Boka to play his longest drum solo of the tour.



Nagoya is a city with a really strong hardcore scene and, just like last time we played here, the place is totally packed, which again causes some awkward merch table moments. Luckily Yoshida-San, who came over from Tokyo, is there to help us out. This show is definitely one of the best shows on this tour, and also one of the strongest line ups, which include Easies, Last One Standing (from Shiga), Courage For League (youth crew), thrashers Freaks, and last but not the least, the amazing Fuck You Heroes, also from Tokyo, which are literally a Japanese reincarnation of DS13.

One thing about the Japanese scene is that if they copy something, they do it absolutely perfectly. The singer of Courage For League introduces their songs in English with a perfect American accent, "C'mon, everybody motherfucking move" or, "Yo everybody come up front." I think that I can finally have a cool conversation about the Japcore scene, but it turns out the guy doesn't speak English at all, not a word...

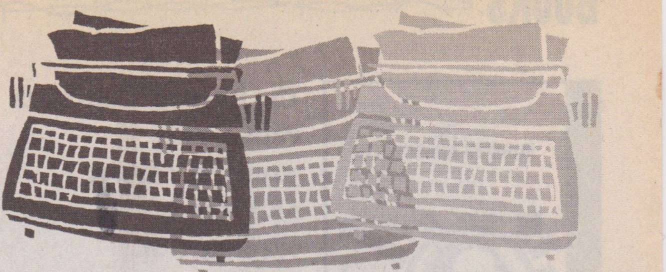
Day 11, Tokyo @ Wall: Blood, bruises and scars

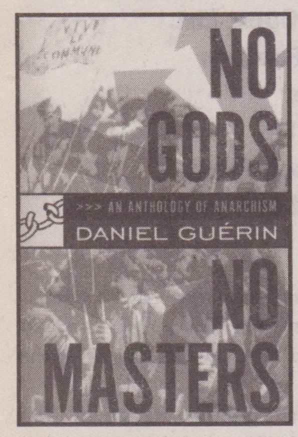
For the first time we don't do a sound check so we have time to do some final gift shopping. The show is totally sold out. What else would you expect with a line up featuring crust heroes Enslave, fastcore Breakfast, Japcore Niagara 33 and the fantastic Fuck You Heroes, who totally steal the show. They are a power-trio, mixing fast hardcore with rock parts and have an obliterating live show. I don't feel very secure coming out after them. David's band Everybody's Enemy are local heroes for the night. They're fast and melodic hardcore punk rocks and David is totally losing his mind during the set. They even play RDP cover—"Crucificados Pelo Sistema"—featuring Boka on drums!

Finally we get on stage, this time without any jet-lag, fresh and ready to rock! The crowd is fucking wild and explodes when we start to play. During our Discharge cover, the DSB guitarist comes onstage to sing along. After the show I don't have the guts to check my body for all the blood, bruises, and scars that I picked up, but actually I don't really care... From the financial point of view, this show is the best-paid show of the tour, and on top of that we sell a shitload of merch, especially T-shirts. The whole evening we spend packing our bags, which are still too heavy.

SECOND PART NEXT MONTH...

BOOKS





No Gods No Masters
Daniel Guérin
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Anarchists can be a fickle bunch at times. When I first received this anthology to review, I was carrying it everywhere with me due to its sheer volume, trying to squeeze in an essay or article every free five minutes that I had. At a discussion group I went to I took *No Gods No Masters* out of my bag while looking for something and someone looked at the cover, sneered and said: "Anarchy for dummies." I asked him what he thought was wrong with condensing a widely written on subject, over 150 years worth of material, and he said: "I don't read theory. Anarchy exists in the heart. It doesn't need long drawn out polemics to be effective." Needless to say his response confused me.

A frequent theme in conversations with anarchists is the idiocy of intellectualism, the dismissal of the idea that just because someone has ploughed through volumes of dense material that means they are smarter or better equipped to deal with questions of authority and rule. Now, I agree with this notion (to a certain extent; too many use it as an excuse for ignorance) but if you're in contact with anarchists regularly, you may have noticed a certain contradictory trait amongst them. At any discussion, meeting, group, etc., most people in the room, any opportunity they get, will immediately take the chance to launch into a tirade against civilization, listing out every reason under the sun why our current neo-liberal society is inherently sexist, racist, dictatorial, completely ingrained blah blah blah and repeat. They will cite the Spanish Civil War, the Ukraine in 1920, the International of 1877 (and on and on) as reasons not to trust Leninists or Maoists or some other statist group. Now how can they know all this without having read on these subjects? If I said to one of the people in the groups I meet with "I'd really like to read *God and State*," there's a good chance they'll ask why, the text is over a century old, and then will be heard referencing from it in conversation.

For me, being someone who wants to understand the development and formations of anarchist theory without having to wade through the abundant texts (and not to generalize but I think most would feel the same way), *No God No Masters* is a pretty handy book. It stretches from the work of Max Stirner and his *Ego and His Own* to the Spanish Civil War and texts regarding anarchy from around the time of WWII. Basically, it tries to condense and contextualize all theory and major anarchist history within one volume. In doing this, the work takes on two faces: one of a—for want of a better term—"Anarchy for Dummies" and also as a kind of coffee table book (for anarchist guests).

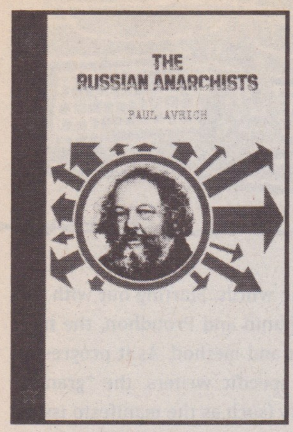
Regarding the first face, the book is extremely useful. The sheer volume of theory and history of anarchy can have a daunting impression on the uninitiated who want to learn. I know when I first found an interest, I had no real idea what to read, inevitably ending up reading right-wing libertarian texts from the library because I didn't know any better. *No Gods No Masters* offers a healthy alternative to wading through all the words. Starting out with sections specific to fundamental authors like Bakunin and Proudhon, the book follows the development of anarchist thought and method. As it progresses, the work gradually shifts in emphasis from specific writers, the "grandfathers" of anarchy, to group writings and history (such as the manifesto issued in 1915 by well-knowns like Malatesta, Goldman, and Berkman). In doing so it manages to demonstrate the evolution of anarchy. The dense intellectualism of early writings makes way for the practicality and bluntness of later group publications, published during times of very tangible social unrest and uncertainties. In this way, it offers insight into how anarchy has developed from an idealized theory into a very real form of belief and revolution. It shows the vitality of the movement.

In regards to *No Gods No Masters* as a coffee table book, I'm referring to the appeal it can have for the initiated as well. Not only does the book offer concise versions of the major theoretical works, giving an easy method of reminding yourself of certain writings, it's also filled with interesting asides and anecdotes. The volume intermittently includes pieces on lesser-knowns such as Emile Henry, praised not for his writing but for his action, and interesting footnotes such as Nestor Makhno's description of a visit to the Kremlin and his subsequent conversation with Lenin regarding the peasant army of the Ukraine. The story appeals not just as an interesting (and amusing) description of how easy it was for Makhno to actually track down Lenin with nearly no interference from security, it's also an interesting character description. The veiled conversation between the two men, with both trying to push their own agenda without outwardly declaring their opinions, is a great in-depth look at two figureheads, while also acting as a metaphor to the unfortunate incidents in the Ukraine.

There are, of course, some faults within the book. For one, regarding the sections covering Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, the texts produced tend to be quite specific to the time they were written and too much of them degenerate into the historical, listing off the names of individuals and groups that have no bearing on the theories produced. As I suggested earlier, many anarchists prefer to exist in the here and now. It's easy to get lost in the pages of historical account, offering no further enlightenment other than some trivia for your own intellectual gratification. There's also plenty of ammo for anarchists to not only dismiss communist thought but to retain their venom towards it. I'm no supporter of communism and I'm fully aware of how many times they've fucked us over, but a lot of anarchists like to forget that it's the past and use it as an excuse to spit in the face and ostracize themselves from groups who see the same glaring wrongs in modern life as we do but just look to a different solution. Where it identifies the betrayals committed by communists on anarchists, it will make you seethe. In fairness it can't be bad to be aware of these things, helping us to realize that we should be very sceptical of folks like "Chairman" Bob Avakian, the RCP and their oh-so-hip front group the World Can't Wait. I'm just afraid that scepticism will lead to bitter bias. One of the fundamental attributes of anarchy will always be the struggle for solidarity, not separation.

In conclusion though, any anthology will have sections with and without interest, sections of lucidity and of confusion, and for the most part *No Gods No Masters* is a well-structured anthology that will be of interest to hardened anarchists and a relief to those of us who want to learn.

—Craig Cox



The Russian Anarchists
Paul Avrich
303 pages • $19.95
AK Press
674-A 23rd St.
Oakland, CA 94612-1163
www.akpress.org

"Let the storm burst forth more strongly!" AK Press once again picks up the slack, reprinting a 1967 Princeton University Press title—Paul Avrich's *The Russian Anarchists.* Written with a sharp eye for history and in a swift, clean style, the book carries us through the fateful, fertile 1905 and 1917 uprisings, down into the broken exiles afterwards.

Avrich makes history read as compelling as any novel. Perhaps even more wrenching because you know the outcomes. We start, however, with the sweep of history—"a stormy petrel" comes to inevitably wash away the repressive monarchists, "harbinger of an immense storm soon to burst upon the Russian land." And where better for such a portent than Russia where, "over the centuries, the Russian borderlands had been the scene of wild, popular uprisings with strong anarchic overtones."

Chapters roll ominous and unstoppable. The 1905 uprising didn't have partisan or anarchist roots. That revolution came elemental and spontaneous:

"No revolutionary vanguard led the workers and housewives into the streets of Petrograd; political ideologies and radical groups were momentarily lost in the chaotic outbreak of a hungry people protesting the lack of bread and the unremitting sufferings of the war."

The portentous text is no hyperbole, given the time and context—there really was a chance at a different sort of society. A future premier remembers the entire nation being swept up with, "a sense of unlimited freedom, a liberation from the most elementary restraints essential to every human society." 1917 comes even stronger—the February uprising, the June demonstrations, the incendiary July days.

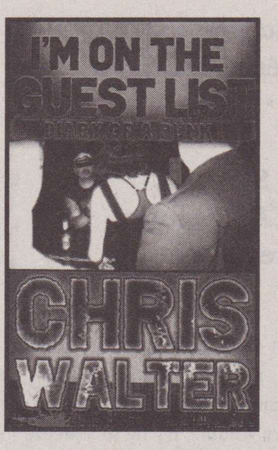
The story comes rich with spies and expelled students, pamphleteers, careerists, and bomb-throwers. The factions get name-checked and explained—anarcho-communists, syndicalists, and individualists. Avrich is no partisan writer, he gives each their due, commenting with a historian's eye on their successes, excesses, and oversights, whether it's the "ultra-fanaticism of Bakunin" or the "seemingly-naïve romanticism of Kropotkin" that failed to sustain the masses after 1917's eruption.

If you thought reading about the anarchist's struggle in the Spanish Civil War was wrenching (which it is), then *The Russian Anarchists*' fleeting victories will be just as relevant. Things could have been different. Maybe the factories could've run better (or at least sustained themselves) via mutual aid. Further, you can't help but engage in the debates: whether trade unions are "living corpses," Bolsheviks as self-serving intellectuals who had betrayed the masses; and whether or not the anarchists could've translated their passionate ideals into a lasting reality for their communities. The questions remain.

History here comes as a play unfolding—you'll recognize some of the players. Bakunin in a remote cabin, still writing books, visited by Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. Lenin as the great Judas, who finally, baldly proclaims that the working class cannot lead themselves—"Practical men know that this is a fairytale." Even the minor characters convey the collective position—the inmate at the Peter-Paul fortress who commits himself to the study of Esperanto—"Eventually he became fluent in the language, but complained that, owing to the dank air of his cell, his lungs had become infected, making it difficult for him to speak at all."

These epilogues, as you can guess, are almost too crushing to finish. Emigration for some, imprisonment for others, and a quiet life for those remaining, maybe seeking, "Escape in the world of scholarship." Transitioning us out are the end pages: a succinct timeline, a full biography and a fine index. Couple this with Avrich's other two books (*Anarchist Voices* and *The Modern School Movement*) and you'll be well on your way for the next storm.

—Travis Fristoe



I'm on the Guest List:
Diary of a Punk
Chris Walter
326 pages • $18
Gofuckyerself Press
www.punkbooks.com

I'm on the Guest List is Chris Walter's autobiographical account of life in Winnipeg as a punk in the '80s and '90s. By "punk" I offer this excerpt:

When I got out of bed it was about living the punk life—drinking and drugging, making noise with my band, busting stuff up, raising hell, and of course, getting laid.

And this he does, for pages upon pages, years upon years. For the first half of the book Walters does little more than get loaded, have sex by any means necessary, complain about how the world owes him and, as the title suggests, worm his way into shows. He lives off welfare and mooches all of his beer and speed from people who are not happy about it. He is, in a word, unlikable.

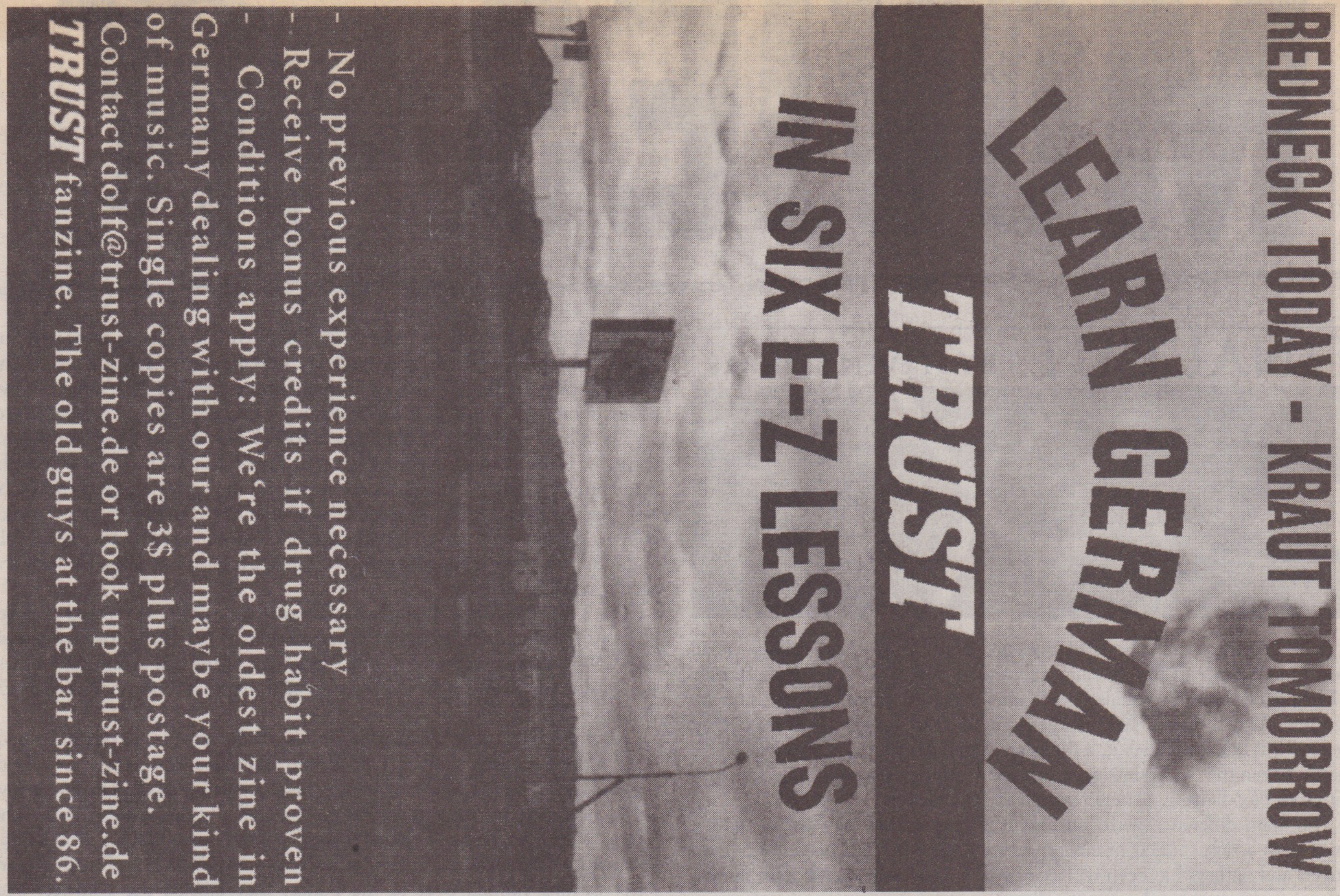
The unemployment system eventually gives him an ultimatum that lands him a job doing construction. When Walters displays a newfound work ethic we start to get the slightest notion that he has some sort of conscience. Slowly he begins to question his life and his worth and his purpose, but fear not for he never actually does anything more than question it. His lifestyle continues on as usual and he eventually finds himself as a deadbeat dad, a homeless drug addict in the shanty environs of East Vancouver. At this point he not only becomes *really* unlikable, but things actually get worse for him.

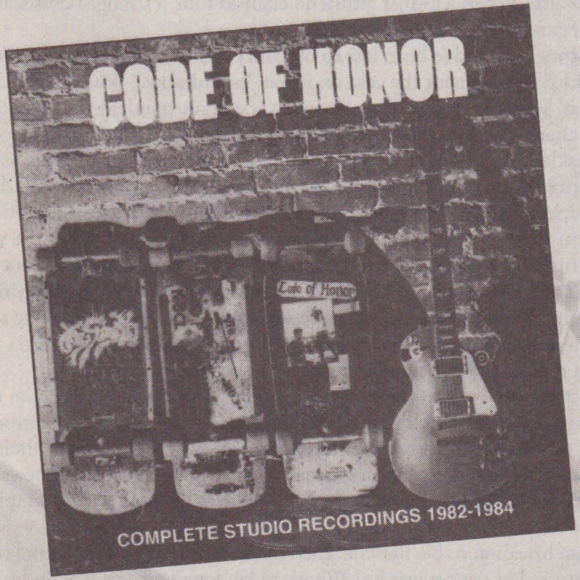
Through the undeserved kindness of friends he slowly gets back on his feet and finds solace in writing. This eventually leads him very organically into the world of self-publishing, garnering him more ego and further means to acquire more drugs and alcohol. Things then get even shittier before he finally finishes what sounds like a successful stint in rehab.

There is the obvious Bukowski comparison here but where Bukowski name-drops other authors, Walter's name-drops people like Harvey Flannigan, James Hetfield, and El Duce. Some of the stories sound a little mythical but with two sections of picture pages the reader is obliged to match a name to a face, making it all a little more believable.

While Walters sounds like a dick he is still a good writer. He has been around the block and slept in its gutter and he has all the stories to prove it, and he's obviously not afraid to spare any details that might sully a reputation or two (his own included). What really makes this book worth reading is that Chris is unapologetic and surly right until the very last page. He is still the same misfit malcontent he was twenty years ago, but because he recognizes how unfair it is that he is still alive he is afforded some slack.

—Craigums





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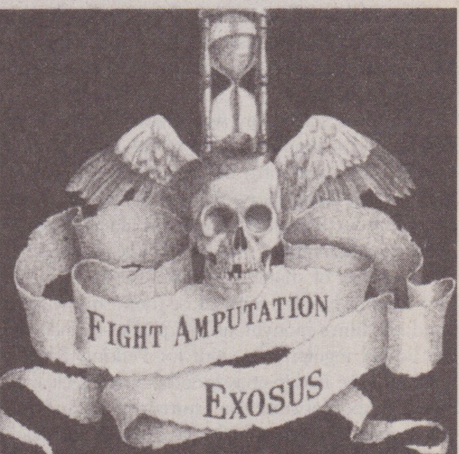

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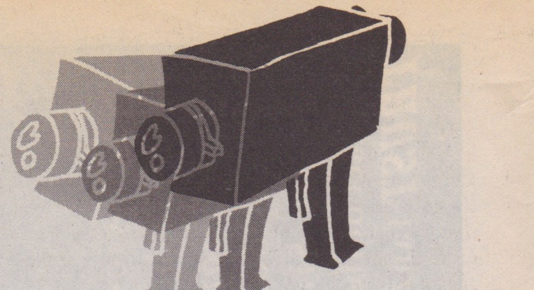
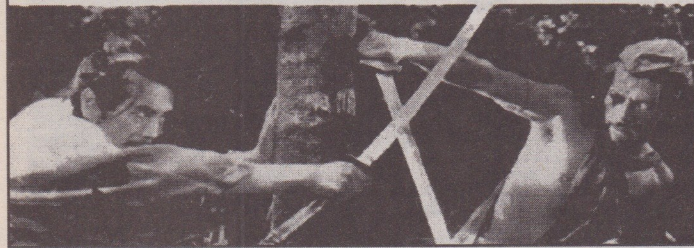


FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



If, between directing **The Wild Ones** and **Straw Dogs**, Sam Peckinpaw had paused to make an art film, he might have ended up with **The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada**. He also would have directed one of his most interesting films. As it happens, Tommy Lee Jones filled in the gap thirty years after the fact. His directorial debut, a Mexican-American effort, attempts to bridge a gap between the two countries and cinemas. All that's missing is Peckinpaw's gratuitous bloodletting. (There's still plenty of violence.)

The main difference with Jones' film is its contemporary setting, which comes with a rich context of modern history and politics. The world of gunslingers and outlaws has been replaced by a charged American border that's a flashpoint of cultural and economic disparity.

Pete Perkins (Tommy Lee Jones) is a grizzled rancher with an especially strong sense of righteousness. He's not the sort to worry about gray areas. He's a self-made man who's reluctant to accept any kind of justice that doesn't conform to his ideas.

The film's screenplay was written by the man who brought you **Amores Perros**, and it employs many of the same techniques—including a plot that switches back and forth between past and present without warning. The plot itself is fairly straightforward, but the free use of time allows the plot to uncover truths from different characters in different ways. Hardly disorienting, the plot opens up and explores territory that otherwise might have proven impossible.

A number of characters fill out the story, but it finally boils down to three. Pete Perkins builds a fairly close friendship with a poor, young Mexican ranch hand, the film's eponymous Melquiades Estrada (Julio Cesar Cedillo), who runs the border regularly to work for Perkins. They become friends—at least as much as Pete Perkins has friends—but it's clear that Estrada is uncomfortable in the limbo between the United States and Mexico (or in the eyes of law enforcement, between legitimacy and illegitimacy). The border patrol is frustrated by its impotence in handling the traffic of illegals, which weighs especially hard on Perkins' opposite, Mike Norton (Barry Pepper); he's a new hire on the patrol, and it's almost as if he takes the passage of illegal Mexicans personally.

Immigration may be difficult to manage, but everyone's in agreement about coyotes. They're a continual problem for both ranchers and land owners, but when Estrada tries to pick a few off to save his small corral of sheep, the shots fly over the ears of the new hire; Norton thinks he's in the crosshairs of a sniper, and of course it's only a matter of seconds that the unfortunate Melquiades Estrada would find himself the final victim of the exchange. Hence, the first burial (hushed up by the border patrol as an unfortunate but unavoidable mistake).

This film has a blunt view of ethics that's honed by the tough realities of border poverty. That, and the singular efforts of Pete Perkins to win his late friend's final wish: to be returned to his wife and family after his death.

In Peckinpaw's **Straw Dogs**, Dustin Hoffman is a pacifist who refuses to surrender his principles even under continued assault. The Pete Perkins character is every bit as single-minded with his goal. He kidnaps and hog-ties Mike Norton, brings along Estrada's rotting body, and begins a trek to a vaguely defined place in Mexico that's described as a kind of paradise. With every stage of their journey (which includes several abortive attempts at escape by the young border officer), Melquiades's body suffers horrific degradation in the merciless sun. In turn, Perkins stakes his life on realizing the final, elusive dream of his friend, though it was probably never a good idea in the first place.

The **Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada** has some intriguing ideas about the value of life seen through the lens of a man's death. The point is brought into hard focus when Perkins and Norton (and the body) are given refuge by an enfeebled old man. He offers food and shelter in return for the simple mercy of being put out of his misery; Perkins cannot oblige him, of course, but the old man's request eventually undergoes a strange evolution of sorts, through the agency of Melquiades.

The **Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada** is one of the new breed of indies powered by name stars, in films so small they might not otherwise have been made. With new-style Westerns like **Brokeback Mountain** making an impression on the film scene, it would he criminal to pass over this small, well-made drama.

Another film, a documentary, addresses a different kind of death. In mid-2003, a thirty-something male, half-dressed and bloodied a bit, was found riding the New York subway. Apparently, he'd been like this for at least a day. When he'd gathered his wits sufficiently, he realized that he didn't know who he was. Moreover, he had no memories of his past; it was as if his memory had been wiped clean, though he seemed articulate and had a clear British accent. After turning himself over to the police, they labeled the nameless man "Unknown White Male." He was summarily turned over to the department of mental health. When a former girlfriend claimed him, a strange odyssey began which, apparently, continues to this day.

The story might have been lost to obscurity if not for the efforts of a friend who decided to document the case on video. In **Unknown White Male**, director Rupert Murray emerges as a somewhat less-than-standard documentarian who has chanced into extraordinary subject matter. With his digital video-cam (and considerable patience), Murray recounts the unknown man's story to offer a fascinating and sometimes scary look into the fringes of human psychology.

He turned out to be Doug Bruce, a Brit living in the US who'd retired from a career in stock-trading to a relaxed life as a photographer. When he walks through his spacious loft, he sees pictures of friends and loved ones, but they leave him at a loss. Clothes hang in the closet, and they all fit, but they're foreign to him. When friends visit, they're surprised to discover that Doug seems to have a different personality. It's as if the brash, sharp-tongued man's body had been replaced with a more introspective substitute.

A doctor describes this rare malady: while most amnesiacs can claim a few memories from which they can reclaim their lives, Bruce suffers from retrograde amnesia—the rarest and most baffling of them all. While they retain their language and certain skills, everything else in their lives is a completely new experience. It's almost like being born anew, the slate of memory wiped completely clear.

Despite his comfortable lifestyle, each moment was filled with a kind of terror. What kind of person was he? What's to be done with his life, and friendships with people whom he doesn't recognize anymore? He admits to a strange paradox. On one hand, he's lost his family bonds, including all memory of his deceased mother. On the other, every day's experience is new—watching fireworks, listening to music... He even has the chance to know the all-encompassing feeling of first love. The lack of preconceptions gives his life a freshness it hadn't known for decades.

One thing seems to disturb his friends more than it does him—that there's been a clear change in personality. The Version One Doug Bruce—brash, overconfident, and sharp-edged—had been replaced by a more introspective and sensitive double, and some friends admit to preferring the older one. Bruce finds himself in the unique position of picking his friends all over again. Some of this old football buddies have nothing in common with him anymore. Bruce's instructor in photography is struck by the differences between his stu-

dent's old and new images. This new personality seems to have developed a depth in his work that was crucially absent before.

Our "unknown white male," increasingly more comfortable with his new identity, now wonders what will happen if the old Doug Bruce comes back. (Doctors estimate the chances of that at 95%.) **Unknown White Male** shows that the realities of amnesia are more fascinating than a Hollywood scriptwriter could dream up, and you're left with the realization that the most intriguing part of this story is yet to come.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

YOU'RE AN OLD MAN IN A YOUNG GIRL'S WORLD

I was shocked when I realized that I'd had seen four of the five Best Picture nominees at this year's Oscars. It kind of freaked me out. That has never happened in my life. Usually the most I have seen is one of them. To make matters worse, I videotaped the ceremony because I had something else to do that night and I actually wanted to watch the show later. I am kind of embarrassed to admit it. How can you not love Jon Stewart? Don't worry there will be no Oscars discussion in this month's column. I don't care who won. I just thought you'd be interested to know what I've been up to.

If you've never heard the audiotapes of Raymond and Peter, you may not understand what the hell is going on in **Shut Yer Dirty Little Mouth**. The film is based on the drunken ramblings of two infamous San Francisco residents whose conversations were recorded by their annoyed next door neighbors. If you've ever had insane neighbors, chances are they were never this crazy. Yet the conversations are compulsively fascinating. You can't stop listening. They put you in a world you'd never want to be fully immersed in. Living vicariously is good enough for me.

Raymond and Peter lived in the Lower Haight area of San Francisco, which before all the dot-com nonsense San Francisco went through was an affordable area of town to live in. When I first moved to SF the one person I knew in town told me not to live in the Lower Haight. Though, when I got used to the city, I found myself hanging out in that part of town. It's where all my friends lived.

Since the first tapes began circulating I have always imagined that Raymond was the dominant one in the relationship. After all, he is always yelling at Peter, "Shut up little man." Peter is the grumpier, more hateful one, but I pictured Ray ruling the apartment. It must be Peter's mumbling. In **Shut Yer Dirty Little Mouth** the roles are reversed. Ray takes Peter's abuse more easily than I pictured.

I also pictured the neighbors as hiding in the apartments, not wanting to incur the wrath of the adjoining drunks. Yet, the film shows a variety of neighbors yelling for them to shut up, listening in or quickly closing the gate when they see Peter coming up the street. The two responsible for the recordings are portrayed as a bong-smoking female and male couple, when it is known that it was two males who made the recordings. Of course, the neighbors had to go about their lives, but somehow you never really think about them too much when you listen to the tapes.

Shut Yer Dirty Little Mouth is based on a play and is shot like one with mainly one setting, Raymond and Peter's apartment. A couple of times Peter ventures out of the apartment to buy some more vodka at the corner store. Though most people wouldn't know the difference, it bothers me that the exteriors weren't shot in San Francisco. I can tell. I know the neighborhood so well that it just looks wrong to me. The convenience store is a lame set. They should have filmed at the actual corner store O'Looney's. It still exists and has a certain charm to it. Overall I would have preferred the whole thing stayed in the apartment. It's all about the eavesdropping anyway. (www.shutyerdirtylittlemouth.com)

For a different type of nutty, go to Canada to see Nardwuar the Human Serviette. The Canadian radio and television personality has a DVD collection of his interviews called **Nardwuar the Human Serviette: Doot Doola Doot Doo…Doot Doo!** If you've never heard of Nardwuar, this is the ultimate introduction. Nardwuar is a funny and fearless interviewer asking offbeat questions to anyone that will give him the time. Most of the interviewees enjoy his style, but sometimes it pisses them off.

The first disc has two episodes from Much Music television called "Nard Wars." The first is a greatest hits of Nardwuar. Here he counts down his top five favorite interviews of the last couple of years, which include Marilyn Manson, Gene Simmons, and Snoop Dogg. There are also bits of interviews where Nardwuar dances with Kelly Rowland, does the hip flip with the Canadian Prime Minister and has his glasses broken by Thurston Moore.

The second episode mostly focuses on Nardwuar's attempt to interview Snoop Dogg for the third time. It is interesting to see how he prepares for his interviews. For Snoop Dogg he collects dolls and records from his friends to show to Snoop to see what kind of reaction he will get. Snoop Dogg has taken a few of these props in the past so Nardwuar is careful to guard his friends' belongings. It is funny to see Nardwuar being a fanboy with Snoop though the whole Snoop Dogg thing goes on too long for me. Apparently, his Snoop Dogg interviews are Much Music's most popular. It just wasn't the most interesting to me.

The second DVD of **Nardwuar The Human Serviette: Doot Doola Doot Doo…Doot Doo!** (yes, there are two DVDs in this collection) features some of the full interviews with people shown in the clips on the first DVD. One of the more interesting is Ian MacKaye who patiently discusses his past even though he continually points out how Nardwuar is mixing up the facts from different events. The two guys from Slayer are so amused by Nardwuar's enthusiasm they can't stop laughing the whole time. Then there is the televangelist who heals Nardwuar then moments later is ready to kill him when Nardwuar asks if he can cure the summertime blues or stupidity. There is also a segment where Nardwuar interviews himself, letting you into the mind of the man himself—plus footage from Nardwuar's bands. (www.alternativetentacles.com)

The minute I saw the cover for **Ramones—The True Story**, I had to laugh a little. It's funny that the "true story" can now come out since three of the founding members are dead and can't refute anything that is said here. That, and the way the DVD cover looks. It just looks cheap. Not to mention that the back states, "This film is totally unauthorized and has not been approved by the Ramones, nor has it been authorized by past or present management of the band." I guess that clears up any misconceptions I might have had about this documentary.

This version of the Ramones story is told by the band's original drummer and producer Tommy Ramone, the tour manager Monte Melnick, the band's art director Arturo Vega, and Hilly Kristal, owner of CBGB's. I don't question the fact that the Ramones were an influential band; I think everyone knows that. Yet, the interviewees act like everyone is denying it and they are here to set the record straight. They also present themselves as having the foresight to know at the time that what the Ramones were doing was really important. Didn't Hilly Kristal think the Ramones were terrible back in the day? At least, Arturo Vega understood that what happened couldn't be explained. It just happened.

Ramones—The True Story focuses on the band in the '70s. There is some cool footage. The big problem is the quality of the footage. I assume this is since they didn't get the rights for any of the footage so they probably used some old VHS copies. The show I really was excited to see is the Ramones' performance on *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert* in 1977. Unfortunately, this is only shown in a small framed box on the top left side of the screen with the cartoon drawing of the band taking up the lower right side, or else in a split screen with one of the interviewees talking over it. My guess is that the footage didn't transfer to DVD too well and they kept it small so it wouldn't look too bad. Personally, bad quality footage doesn't bother me too much; I'd rather see the footage no matter how crappy it looks. There is also footage shot by Danny Fields in 1974 and Richard Robinson in 1975. On Robinson's footage sound is blown out and distorted but the picture looks great. There is also a poor quality version of the *Tomorrow Show* interview and performance, which is fortunately available on the **Tomorrow Show with Tom Snyder: Punk and New Wave** DVD, so you can see it in its entirety with good quality picture and sound.

Ramones—The True Story doesn't really feel like the whole story. It is simply the opinions of a couple of guys who were there when it was happening. There's nothing wrong with that, but this DVD tries to pass it off as something more. If you want the full story of the Ramones, the documentary **End of the Century** is the way to go. If you can't get enough of the Ramones, then you'll want to check out this DVD too.

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o MRR, PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Email me at carolynmrr@juno.com if you have a film screening in San Francisco. I will go see it.

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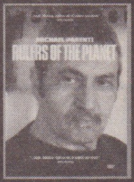

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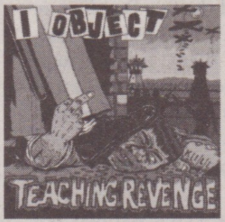

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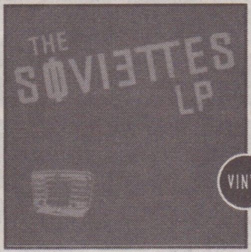

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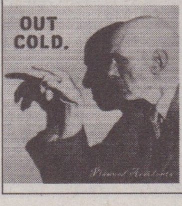

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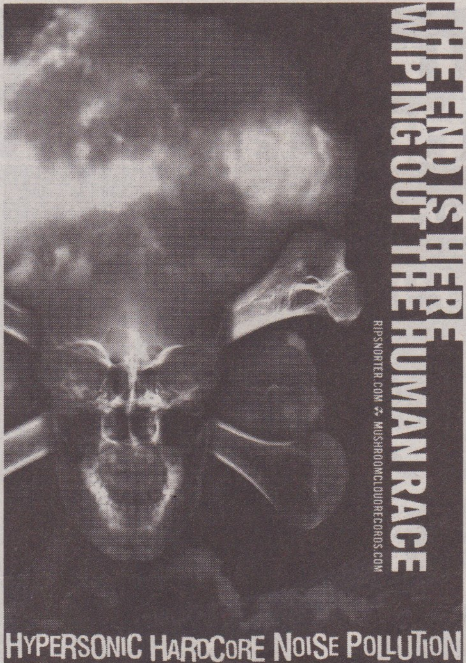

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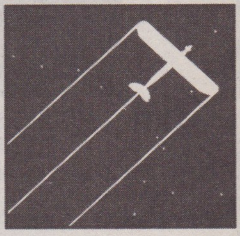

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Reviewers: Tim Brooks (TB), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Rob Coons (RC), Carl Cordova (CC), Paul Curran (PC), Andy Darling (AD), Dr. Dante (DD), Sean Dougan (SD), Nic Eagle (NE), Jonathan Floyd (JF), Jeff Heermann (JH), Vince Horner (VH), Layla Gibbon (LG), Chris Hubbard (CS), Kenny Kaos (KK), Carolyn Keddy (CK), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Will Kinser (WK), Elliott Lange (EL), Ray Lujan (RL), Hal MacLean (HM), Allan McNaughton (AM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Bruce Roehrs (BR), Ken Sanderson (KS), Martin Sorrondeguy (MS), Steve Spinali (SS), Brian Stern (BS), Ryan Wells (RW), Shane White (SW).

3 DELICIAS – "Sticky" EP

Bassless Euro punk that flirts with blues and spazz in equal amounts. They certainly aren't sleeping through this, which has been my main complaint with this sort of crap as of late. There is actual energy here, thankfully. It took several listens to this single to actually warm up to it, but my original branding of "mediocre" has risen to "pretty good." I doubt I'll be pulling this out for repeated plays, but I will definitely listen to what they do next. (MC)

(www.bigblackholerecords.tk)

8000 – "Answers" CD

Okay. Can you imagine what it would sound like if you crossed a slowed-down MOTÖRHEAD with CHAIN OF STRENGTH, then threw in Eddie Van Halen for a few guitar solos? I fucking can't, and thinking about is making me dizzy. Unfortunately, I think that's the sound 8000 are going for as they offer up nine tracks that blend together mid-paced guitar driven '80s bar rock and youth-crew hardcore. Ughh…I've heard a million awful bands mix hardcore and metal, but never quite like this. They get points for originality, but this sucker is still headed for the dumpster. (VH)

(Blurred, 482-1 Naka, Kambara, Ihara, Shizuoka 421-3213 JAPAN)

THE ACCELERATORS – "Nowhere Near Funny" EP

Yes! The ACCELERATORS from Carbondale, Illinois have frisky punk rock EP prepared for you goddamn losers. This punk rock has up-tempo music and a nasty undercurrent of very bad behaviour lurking not far below the surface. On "Don't Invite Me" these fuckers indicate that they would be the guests from hell if they were invited to your party. You know—blowing up the toilet with M-80's, stealing your mother's drugs and taking a shit in the linen closet! Other topics these cretins cover are racism in boxing in the early 1900s and street-racing hot rods in a sudden death playoff. This is a real good punk record! The *Nowhere Near Funny* EP has that mischievous punk attitude just dripping from the seams—these Illinois fucks are incorrigible! Highly recommended for all you ne'er-do-wells! (BR)

(Let's Pretend Records, PO Box 2993, Carbondale, IL 62902)

THE ADVERTS – "Crossing the Red Sea with…" LP

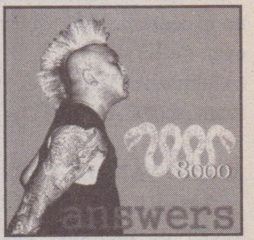
The first album by the ADVERTS, repressed on vinyl and looking very much like the original I must say. I am pretty sure this is an elaborate bootleg, or maybe after 28 years Bright Records has decided to give it another go—and no one told them about CDs. Anyway, the ADVERTS were a great band with a prolific front-man in TV Smith who were best known by many for their big 1977 summer hit "Gary Gilmore's Eyes"—which is snuck onto the end of this, not having been on the original LP—but who had way more to offer than that. Great songs such as "One Chord Wonders," "Bored Teenagers," "New Church," "No Time To Be 21," "Safety in Numbers," and "Great British Mistake" are testaments to how good they were. Some punk "historians" will tell you that the ADVERTS were a promising band that never lived up to their potential but I disagree: in fact TV Smith continued to make great music long after the band broke up. Highly recommended for you young 'uns. (AD)

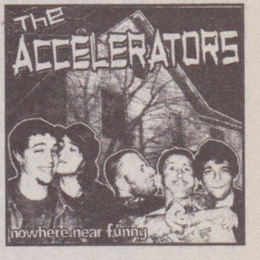
(no address)

AHLEUCHATISTAS – "What You Will" CD

This CD came with five pages of promotional copy and press blurbs, including short bios of each member and a three-quarter page explanation of their name (it's a reference to a CHARLIE PARKER song and the Zapatistas). What you get is 14 tracks of instrumental math-rock noodling from three dudes who are into prog rock, jazz, and "avant rock" and who appear to take themselves way too seriously. They're obviously very good musicians and each piece has moments of brilliance but to be honest there isn't a tune in the bunch. There's just nothing to latch on to. Live they might be an entirely different proposition, but I can't see myself putting this on at home. If you're looking for music to stroke your chin to, it could be right up your street. (AM)

(Cuneiform, PO Box 8427, Silver Spring, MD 20907, www.cuneiformrecords.com)





AKIMBO – "Forging Steel and Laying Stone" CD

I have to admit that I am the one always saying that punk/hardcore needs to keep forging ahead rather than remain this fucking retro hipster stomping ground it has become. And while this release is not really my thing, I will say, at least they do not mire in the muck of becoming a parody of everything that punk is against like becoming white belt indie rock douche bags or something very similarly close. This band uses all sorts of elements to their advantage. They sound like a cross between HIGH ON FIRE, the FLESHIES, the MELVINS, and HEROIN. It's quite possible to describe them as discordant stoner rock, except a hardcore version of that. Alternative Tentacles has always put out a weird mix of bands and styles and this here is no exception. Very well recorded and sharp as ever. (WK)

(Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141)

AMERICAN DISTRESS – CD

AMERICAN DISTRESS offers up 12 tracks of melodic, socio-political, modern hardcore that, oddly enough, has a little bit of a Bay Area pop punk feel to it. The guitars are clean. The vocals are dirty and raspy. And their paint-by-number songs reek of positivity. *"Whooo Oh Whoo Ohhhhh"*... I guess listening to this and reading these insightful lyrics is supposed to make me feel energized and excited about life…and I'm sure a lot of really cute 16-year-old girls love this band. But damn, by the end of the CD I'm feeling like I just spent some "one on one" time in the confession booth with Father Murphy and can't get my pants zipped back up. (VH)

(Tent City, 101 W. 23rd St. #2341, New York, NY 10011)

ARMALITE – CD

A side project of sorts with Atom of ATOM & HIS PACKAGE and Dan Yemin of PAINT IT BLACK as well as two other noteworthy hardcore dudes. A good mix of melodic HC and punk rock. Along the ways of DILLINGER FOUR in sound and energy. Although Atom's vocals and lyrics do have a distinct feel. A good release for four guys getting together for fun. (RL)

(No Idea)

ARTIMUS PYLE – "Kuroi Kyoukatabira" EP

They may not be a full-time band anymore, but when they reconvene and record or play live, they are still better than 95% of the bands out there. I have been a huge ARTIMUS PYLE fan since the beginning and this EP is no let down. Heavy, blasting hardcore that seamlessly flows between hammering blasts of fury to slow and doom-filled breaks. The ever-present edge of gloom and darkness is still there along with Robert's throat slaughtering vocals. I hope they are having an awesome tour of the Pacific Rim and I am looking forward to seeing them in SF upon their return. (RC)

(Wrench In The Gears, PO Box 476903, Chicago, IL 60647)

A SCANNER DARKLY – CD

A good, short collection of sci-fi-addled metalcore from this Milwaukee group. They've got a semi-tech angle that fits the Philip K. Dick focus of their lyrics and imagery (and band name) as do the layers of sound effect augmentation. This isn't over-the-top chaotic or technical, just nicely quirky, inventive, and catchy, with a host of comparisons coming to mind like: OLD MAN GLOOM, BOTCH, GRAF ORLOCK, and LICKGOLDENSKY. The guitars in particular are pretty impressive with plenty of changes and notable riffs but the whole band really coalesces into a solid multi-faceted vision. Definitely looking forward to hearing more from these guys. (EL)

(Gilead Media, www.gileadmedia.net)

AVERSIONS – "Black Alibi" EP

Fuck, I love the music coming out of Quebec these days. BBQ, SAINTE CATHARINES, and FIFTH HOUR HERO are just some of the bright lights that are coming out of our French-speaking neighbors to the north. The AVERSIONS come in with a straight-out rocking sound with some post punk touches that would probably go well with any fan of *Horizontal Action* or the bands that they cover. If forced to compare the AVERSIONS with any one band I would say that they sort of remind me of the BASEBALL FURIES, and I say that with the highest respect. Worth seeking out and limited to 300. (JF)

(In Style)

AXES OF EVIL / HOLLOWPOINTS – split EP

A pair of songs each from these two Seattle based bands. AXES OF EVIL has sort of a speed-skate-punk feel that recalls memories of fellow Northwesterners PORTRAIT OF POVERTY. HOLLOWPOINTS, on the other hand, play that strange American blend of hardcore, street punk, and oi. Not quite SLAPSHOT, but maybe a li'l US BOMBS thing going on. This is a decent split and I bet both bands are good live. (JF)

(New Regard Media, PO Box 5706, Bellingham, WA 98227)

BANJAX / VÖETSEK – split CD

This CD encompasses two female-fronted bands. BANJAX, who is from Japan, blasts through four songs of tough, thrashing hardcore with throat shredding vocals. They mix things up a bit with some tempo and vocal style changes, but this is pretty straightforward and entertaining. VÖETSEK bumps the speedometer up and hit it hard with their own fastcore blitz. As you would expect, this is super fast and messy. And this time around VÖETSEK sound more metal than I recall them ever sounding before. But the songs are still short, fast, and loud...and that is what the kids want, right? (RC)

(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto, 624-0193, JAPAN, www.dance.ne.jp/~mcr)

BITTER END – "Mind in Chains" CD

As much as I hate to admit it, the straight edge hardcore scene is still feeling the lasting effects of NO WARNING, particularly their mosh-tastic (sic) full length *Ill Blood*. This six-song CDEP by this Texas band is no exception. Like GUNS UP!, BITTER END reminds me too much of NO WARNING. But if angry, late-'80s NYHC like KILLING TIME and BREAKDOWN (whom they cover on here) is your thing, then BITTER END is as good as they come. (CC)

(www.malfunctionrecords.com)

BLACK SHEEP SQUADRON – "Foreign Objects" CD

New York's BLACK SS pounds out twelve tracks of relentlessly fast, totally pissed, in your face '80s-style American hardcore. It's raw and uncompromising—not at all contrived or too formulaic. 12 songs. 17 minutes. No bullshit. No metal. Fuck yeah! (VH)

(Reaper, PO Box 2935, Liverpool, NY 13089)

BLOWCHUNKS – "Hey Stupid!" EP

Based on previous releases, I thought I had BLOWCHUNKS pegged as your dime-a-dozen Euro garage punk band, in the same league as, I dunno, SUPERHELICOPTER LTD. or something. Turns out either I wasn't listening before, or they went straight greaser punk in between releases. The only thing saving this from being another trucker hat hi-octane outing is the exploding garbage can recording. Not nearly as impressive as I expected…but limited as hell. When will it end? (MC)

(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY)

THE BROKEDOWNS – "These Colors Don't Run: The Musical" CD

A good punk release from this Chicago combo that reminds me of DILLINGER FOUR

and LATTERMAN with some muscle. Less pop and more melodic hardcore tendencies at times. A good, raw full-length. (RL)
(Big Action, www.bigactionrecords.com)

BRUTAL KNIGHTS – "The Pleasure is All Thine" LP
Toronto's dirty rock meisters, BRUTAL KNIGHTS, have a low-down gutter dwelling piece of refuse for you garage punks. If you are a fan of CANDY SNATCHERS, HUMPERS, or LAZY COWGIRLS, this might appeal to you. The fast songs kick like a mule in a filthy stall. You can always skip the slow songs. Rock 'n' roll Canadian style! (BR)
(Deranged, www.derangedrecords.com)

THE BUFFETS – "Saucy Jack" CD
In theory this should be amazing. The new HEADCOATEES! The BUFFETS were formed for a one-off show with the incomparable Billy Childish's BUFF MEDWAYS, to be the girl counterparts *a la* THEE HEADCOATEES. They did a split single I think for the show, and this LP also. Since I got a crappy CD with no information or even a decent pixilated cover, I had to do some internet sleuthing to find out who was in the band beyond Bongo Debbie who is obviously on the cover. I came up with nothing but a mysterious Sister Tiffany who flew in from Seattle. *At any rate*… This is just OK. The singer's voice kind of drove me crazy by the end of the CD. They aim for the CREAM/late-era WHO sound of the BUFFS but don't quite get there. The best song on here is "Unable to See the Good," while most of the rest of the songs are just passable versions. That is disappointing, because one of my favourite things about going to see THEE HEACOATES/HEADCOATEES as a teenager every month at the St. John's Tavern in London, was in fact that the HEADCOATEES—and of course the DEL MONAS (they were the MILKSHAKES sister band)—LPs were a total soundtrack also. So a new Billy Childish related girl group was exciting news to these ears. I will, however, be sticking to the non-Childish A-LINES, who are in his rock family tree but do not cover his songs. (LG)
(Damaged Goods, www.damagedgoods.co.uk)

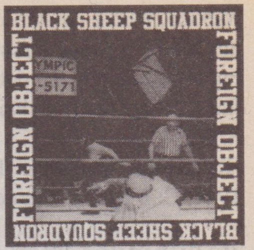
THE BULLETS – CDEP
The press release compares them to the STOOGES with BON SCOTT on vocals—in yer dreams! This is straight-ahead bar rock with no charm or good riffage, they need to get back into the garage and out of the bars or something, this is lame and impotent. If you care about this sort of thing this was mastered by Jim Diamond and features Jonny Evans ex of the MIDNIGHT EVILS and Dave Feirn formally of JANIS FIGURE. (LG)
(www.thebullets.net)

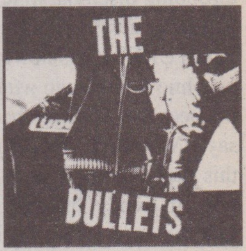
BUZZCOCKS – "Another Music in a Different Kitchen" LP
You know them and you love them, and now you can own their stellar first full-length (and best release) on vinyl in case you have missed it all along. Dating all the way back to 1978, these 12 songs capture the true angst and energy of the budding punk scene of the time. Pete Shelley and company nails each song, creating classic hook filled punk with those distinct one-of-a-kind vocals. From the opening riff of "Fast Cars" you will not be able to stop listening to this record till the last note is hit. If all you have by the BUZZCOCKS is the *Singles Going Steady* release and think you have all you need by them, then think again because this is essential! And it should be noted this is a quality boot from the artwork to the sound, so be sure to pick it up. (RC)
(bootleg, no address)

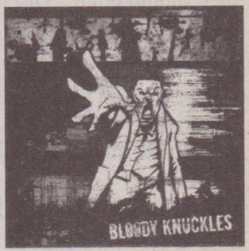
BY MY WILL – "Bloody Knuckles" CD
South San Francisco's BY MY WILL delivers six tracks of tough MADBALL/KILLING TIME-style knuckle dragging HC, with gang chorus shouts and mosh breakdowns along with the tough, sludgy, and heavy metallic attack breakdowns you'd find in the best moments of SEPULTURA. Precision windmill chunka chunka, with pro-recording and hard vocals shouting lyrics borne of the frustration typical of this genre, but also featuring storytelling to reflect the chaos of California—prisons, freeway amber alerts, and the difficulty and disappointments of immigration. Solid. (KS)
(Carjacker, PO Box 51812, Albuquerque, NM 87181, www.carjackersyndicate.com)

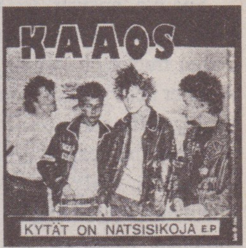
CADGERS / KAAOS – split EP
One of the early classics of Finnish hardcore punk gets the reissue treatment; this little split EP contains two of the best, longest running European hardcore bands ever, KAAOS and RIISTETYT (neé CADGERS, which is what they were called at the time of this split). A small portend of the fury these bands would soon unleash, this is a charming, exciting look at these two bands in their nascent days, when the chaotic, falling-apart-but-somehow-keeping-it-together sound of Finn-core was being defined. I'd be surprised if all but the most novice fans of international DIY hardcore haven't investigated these bands already, if not this record, but this is a pretty essential record in the Finnish HC pantheon so this reissue is a welcome one. The Assel reissue has the original artwork from the P. Tuotanto release (I think? There are a couple of sleeve variations on this one), though there is also a competing reissue on Hohnie records that has different, crazier, more punked out art. I am not quite sure what the deal is with there being two concurrent reissues of one record, but if you don't have this on vinyl it is pretty much a no-brainer. (GN)
(Assel, Groner Landstr 48, 37081 Goettingen, GERMANY, www.assel-records.de)

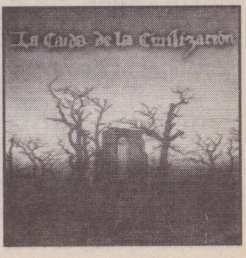
LA CARDA DE LA CIVILIZACIÓN – "Traves de los Anos" CD
Crusty, political thrash from Mexico with screechy vocals (and a couple of songs with super deep, growly vocals), pronounced bass lines, and bizarre computer-generated art. I would be stoked to see this band if I was traveling through Mexico, with their angry politics and crust-core attack, but the overall affect of this listening to this CD was not particularly overwhelming. I am really into the existence of DIY punk scenes in countries like











Mexico, where being a punk or an outsider of any kind is a dangerous statement of resistance, but unfortunately the poor recording quality of this CD kept me from being able to really enjoy it. (GN)

(Reacciona, Fernando Lozano, Apdo Postal 1946, C: P 64001, Monterrey NL, MEXICO)

COCKBIRDS – "Superdanke" CD

Could this be the worst named German band I had to review this issue? They had to compete with the FELCHERS, so it's a tough call. Song one has a sugary girl singing over some three-chord trad punk, which was pretty nondescript. *But then* song two kind of blew my mind, and not in the way I like my mind to be blown, i.e., with "good music." It starts with a chorus of beer hall German gents chanting over afore-mentioned trad punk, which simultaneously features background disco strings *a la* DONNA SUMMER…*(not joking)* then a throbbing disco bassline comes in and the beer hall fades away and a Germanic "dude from the RAPTURE" starts howling provocatively, then a techno breakdown *with the disco strings*, and the beer hall boys are back with us. What can I say? *Not much!* Hopefully, I will never hear this band again. This is the dictionary definition of trendy bullshit. Ridiculous! It seems like they are trying to do some kind of post-punk/hipster thing, but had too many people at the board meeting deciding which direction they should go in. "Disco!" "Streetpunk!" "Pub rock?" "New Wave?" I love old German punk, this however reminds me of the fact that this is the nation that decided that DAVID HASSELHOFF and the SCORPIONS were suitable performers to mark the fall of the Berlin Wall. (LG)

(Indigo, www.staatsakt.de)

COMRADES / LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER – split EP

Spain's answer to PHOBIA, LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER bursts forth with a half-dozen tracks of surging, socio-political grind. A super heavy guitar sound and a slew of meat-slicing riffs and non-stop energetic fury puts this atop the heap of potentially similar-sounding bands. Italy's COMRADES meanwhile, kicks out three tracks of hard-charging power-violence, including a speedy RORSCHACH cover. Both bands have refreshingly good lyrical takes on familiar terrain, such as COMRADES's uniquely misanthropic "Amoebic." Definitely one of the better representations of European hardcore grind. (EL)

COWBOYS FROM OUTERSPACE – "Sleeping With Ghosts" CD

Entertainment shouldn't be a *chore,* should it—that's why we pay for CDs, movie tickets and lap dances, right? *Sleeping With Ghosts* is either a down-and-dirty blues-influenced rock record that pays tribute to Robert Johnson ("Preaching the Blues") and the GUN CLUB (whoops and yells) or a soul-draining marathon session by a bar band best enjoyed after five liters of lager—me, I don't know what they're all about. Kinda rock, kinda NEW CHRISTS (the dude standing in the foreground of the band pic looks a lot like Rob Younger), kinda half-hearted. They're probably good fun live. (JH)

(Nova Express, Demeure de Levant 21, Chemin des Carriéres, 71150 FRANCE, kaisernova@aol.com)

CONCRETE FACELIFT / RAT BYTE – split EP

Rough skate-core from what sounds like two decades ago, from a bunch of folks who probably weren't even born yet. CONCRETE FACELIFT sounds like a more hardcore DAY-GLO ABORTIONS, RATBYTE like any number of no-mark bands who would always show up on Mystic comps. Neither band is horrible by any means and I'm sure they're a blast live, but they just aren't rocking my world on record. If it were a skate comp, RAT BYTE would take the trophy for their song "Raditude." (TB)

(FNS, www.fnsboston.net)

CONCRETE FACELIFT – "Uuaaggghhh" EP

Skate-core/thrash from Massachusetts—CONCRETE FACELIFT stands far apart from the crowd of mediocre bands in this style of hardcore for a few reasons: solid songwriting, lots of energy, good vocalist, and a killer guitar sound. Plus this six-song EP (one's an instrumental) is short and sweet and leaves you wanting another listen instead of wishing it was over already. Definitely recommended. (CS)

(FNS/Party Time, www.fnsboston.net)

THE COOTERS – "Chaos or Bust" CD

The latest addition to the Profane roster is comedy punk act the COOTERS from Mississippi. It's hard to really nail down their sound because they take cues from everything from electric blues to 4/4 punk. The originals seem to remain more in the rockin' realm though, sometimes reminding me of DANZIG solo albums. There are quite a few covers here as well of bands such as the MISFITS, DISCHARGE, and MOTÖRHEAD. They are definitely proficient musicians. This CD comes with some bits about chaos theory and weather patterns. Nicely recorded, even contains a video for the folks with computers. (WK)

(Profane Existence, www.profaneexistence.com)

CRIME DESIRE – " Id Music to Combat the Super Ego" LP

Fast-paced throttling hardcore featuring herky-jerky rampaging with really hard-to-take, squawky, high-pitched, spewing, poetry-style stream of consciousness lyrics that orbit around sex, rape, orgasms, and pornography in vague permutations. Avant hardcore like LOCUST or their ilk, though this is more straightforward in musical attack than CRIME DESIRE's last LP, with near-mosh parts and sXe-style gang choruses slipped in-between the fast-paced, confused chaos. This works best on the second side before it descends into and out of noise; and there's a Theremin! Yee gads! Nice obi and black on black record sleeve. (KS)

($12 ppd: Life's a Rape, c/o M. Colin Tappe, PO Box 278, Carlsbad, CA 92108)

CROSS EXAMINATION – "The Hung Jury" EP

Pretty righteous 7" of total crossover thrash genius/buffoonery from this St. Louis self-proclaimed party squad. The record cover reminds me of old MOD/SOD album covers and well, so does the music—that perfect blend of thrash metal and thrash hardcore that MUNICIPAL WASTE in particular has been so prominent about bringing back to the fore lately. While being pretty blatant about their WASTE influence, these guys still have a lot going for them, like their ridiculous lyrics and their delivery, and some serious thrash metal riffing—the intro alone has a good album's worth of riffs in it. Definitely enough energy here to conjure some quality circle pit action. (EL)

(Deep Six, www.deepsixrecords.com)

DAMAGED – CD

Fuck, these guys are hardcore, and when I say "hardcore" I mean hard fucking core with a capital F! Every song is just blasted out with intensity and fierce hatred. This release will appeal to fans of BLOOD FOR BLOOD or other tough hardcore bands like MADBALL and JUDGE. The music has mid-tempo mosh parts, fast parts, and some serious guitar-soaked saturation. The only thing about this band is that they kind of strike me as a one-trick pony, only because every song is so over the top and full of hatred that it loses the very edge that makes it really aggressive music. You start to think this is all these folks think about. There is a lot to be pissed about these days like the scene, the state of the world, lack of any sort of inspiration. I'm just saying they could really use to mix it up—there's no need to just stick to the same old subjects. Still, this does the job, and could definitely get a crowd of crazy hate filled dudes going nuts. Better than a lot of stuff

I hear these days in this realm of heavy hardcore, based on pure emotion. (WK)
(Action Man, www.actionmanrecords.com)

DAN – "Thology" CD
This UK band was around in the late '80s in the era of SNUFF, LEATHERFACE, MEGA CITY 4, JOYCE McKINNEY EXPERIENCE, and SOFAHEAD. Uptempo melodic HC with a girl singer. I didn't realize this band had so many releases with 64 tracks on this double disc. Not exactly legendary but a good political band from a good time in UK punk history. (RL)
(Boss Tuneage, www.bosstuneage.com)

DARLINGTON – "Sex" CD
Seeing how these guys like to act like prima donna rock stars and treat club people like shit, I will try to keep this short and too the point. DARLINGTON is a basic poppy punk rock 'n' roll band that is a lot like the NOBODYS in their juvenile humor and subject matter. Maybe you will like it, I do not. (JF)
(Fast Music, PO BOX 206512, New Haven, CT 06520)

DEE RANGERS – "Five Spanish Minutes" CD
European garage that falls too close to the garbage that riddled the '80s. Production too clean, not enough of that dirty '60s garage crunch, not enough in the fuzz department, and lacking the amateur angst that makes this genre what it is. Unfortunate, as these boys can write good and play well. Back to the drawing board. (SD)
(Screaming Apple, Dustemichstr 14, 50939 Köln, GERMANY, screamapp@aol.com)

DESTRUKTERS / URINAL MINTS – split EP
First up, DESTRUKTERS fire out three songs of mild retro hardcore. Coming off as a mid-period MDC; that is, the MDC that was just starting to loss its edge and my interest. Just not enough stick-a-bility to have my well-endorsed thumbs on the vertical rise. Four tracks from the URINAL MINTS that leave me feeling as cold as their vinyl buddies. Rocked out punk that's missing the tunes, those killer hooks, and basically anything of remote interest. Maximum points on the Bore-o-Meter. (SD)
(Pinko, www.urinalmints.com)

DEVICES – "Who We Are, Where We Are Going" LP
Screamy shit with lots of dynamic changes. Behold the musicianship; behold the screamy intensity and raw emotion… Turds. (BS)
(Discern Direction, PO Box 10083, Eugene, OR 97440, www.discrerndirection.com)

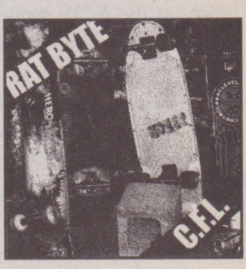
DIAVOLO ROSSO – "Never Follow…" LP
This record came out last year but we just got it here at *MRR*. This band has a sound that's hard to pin down, not because it's unique but because it has a mish-mash of styles. A lot of TRAG-core influence with some emo, a pinch of metal, thrash, crust, and youth crew. I like their politics, but the lyrics are embarrassingly obvious: "Christians in hardcore? Ha ha, you're a bore!" or "Fuck your fascist point of view!" The artwork is very "well done," but plain, non-descript, and boring, which pretty much sums up this record as a whole. (PC)
(Sabotage, Hacketauerstr. 30, 51063 Koeln, GERMANY, www.sabotage-now.com)

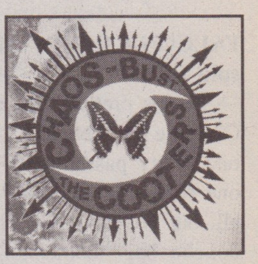
DISKONTO – "Watch Us Burn" CD
Hammering away for over eleven years these Swedes have still got it. No letting up in speed and intensity, like a cross between ANTI CIMEX, DISCHARGE, and CONFLICT, this is an absolute monster. Anti-war, anti-state lyrics in Swedish with explanations in English, 19 live bonus cuts including BASTARD and DRI covers—this is a treat in the sea of hardcore mediocrity. (TB)
(Crimes Against Humanity, PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1421)

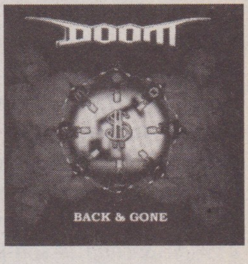
DOOM – "Back & Gone" 2xCD & DVD
This is a double live record from the UK crust legends and a tribute to the untimely passing of their most recent singer, Wayne Southworth, who died in March 2005 of a massive epileptic seizure. Disc One is the full set of the last show Wayne ever played with DOOM recorded in February '05. Disc Two is their set at the "Sozzfest" benefit show that the band and their friends put on in commemoration of Wayne a couple months later. The DVD is the show with Wayne in February, the same that's on Disc One. The sound quality of both shows is top-notch and crystal clear (as is the video recording)—it almost sounds like a studio record. Classics like "Exploitation" and "Police Bastard" are present of course, and the band is in fine form. A fitting send-off for an unfortunate loss. (EL)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN, www.dance.ne.jp/~mcr)

DONA MALDAD – "En Llamas de Rabia" EP
Venezuela has been producing some killer and interesting punk for some years now, and they do it again with this 7". Totally recommended for those who like to follow Latin American punk or for those who are interested in punk on a world level. This release has punch and packs some power both musically and lyrically. Many topics covered here, including anarchism and liberation on many levels, They surprised me with a great BLITZ cover of "New Age" but the lyrics have been altered to deliver a message of frustration with drug abuse. This is an overall excellent EP—Punk, punk, fucking *punk!!!* (MS)
(apatia_no@gmx.net)

DOWINA – "Brezalauspurch" CD
Five tracks of medium-paced, chunky punk rock. The production is punchy and the guttural vocals are sung in English. The artwork has a medieval theme but only the first song is about ancient battlefields. The others cover a *Clockwork Orange* fantasy, religious hypocrisy, and the loss of friendship. Track four is a cheesy power-ballad about the suicide of a young prostitute, complete with an intro of waves crashing against the harbor and seagulls in the sky. I mean, seriously cheesy. Against all the odds, I found myself liking this. (AM)
(Martin Jankowic, PO Box 172, 820 05 Bratislava 25, SLOVAKIA, dowina@zoznam.sk)







DROWN IN BLOOD – "Blood Red Path" LP

A depressive slab of melancholic metal from this German killing unit, this is bleak crust infused with total old-school death metal *a la* BOLT THROWER and *Left Hand Path*-era ENTOMBED. The sound they captured on this record is great—a huge production with massively heavy guitars, steamrolling drums and roaring vocals. I'd say this definitely leans more on the death metal end of the spectrum, but they still retain a discernable crust influence to temper the hesher tendencies. Lyrics to only a couple songs are included, but these are of the typically sunny topics of blood-strewn battlefields and tear-streaked despair. Certainly one of the heavier things I've heard in a while. (EL)

(Institut fur Mentale Hygiene, Postfach 100136, 45601 Recklinghausen, GERMANY, www.mentale-hygiene.antifa.net)

FALCON CREST / NILS & NOODLES – split EP

This is pretty much a waste of your time. One side has a band (FALCON CREST) doing one pretty passable NIRVANA imitation and one AOF-sounding hardcore song. Not bad at all, but not amazing. The flip side has some douche bag "comedian" making fun of the band on side A, and not even being funny about it. FALCON CREST did themselves no favors whatsoever by being involved in this wankery. (AM)

(Big Action, 360 S. Lexington Pkwy. #119, St. Paul, MN 55105, www.bigactionrecords.com)

THE FATALS – 10"

…where are these shitheads from??? France??? I guess it doesn't really matter where these dudes are from cuz their record ain't one that I'm pushin'……!!!!! I'm not into this pure noise jive...I've never been a fan of PUSSY GALORE and I think most stuff on In The Red is dog shit, so naturally this wall of static turns my dick to putty in my soft little hand…..!!!!!! As a matter-a-fact I wish that Jon Spencer and the rest of the swine that started this noise trend would drop dead….!!!!!! Put that into your alterno/indie-pop pipe and smoke it you motherfucking two-bit #*%@!!&#?@!!!# shit-heels!!!!!! (SW)

(Yakisakana, 51 Rue Renaudel, 76 100 Rouen, FRANCE, www.yakisakana.tk)

FE FI FO FUMS – "Shake All Night" LP

Anyone worth their weight knows that the Boom Boom imprint is the #1 stop for cruddy, trashy budget punk in this day and age. While previously treading almost exclusively on the "garage" side of the fence with their releases, *Shake All Night* is a punk album start to finish…and a great one at that. The potential on the FUMS' debut 7" is more than fully realized here, capturing the sprit and sound of SUPERCHARGER at their very best, but coming off as slightly more capable (which may or may not be an insult), meaner and a whole lot louder. Most tunes barely crack the two-minute mark and all of them produced the promised shaking. A perfect party record and a sure year-end Top 10 entry. Fuuuuuuuuuuuum! (MC)

(Boom Boom Of Renton, 9014 13th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98106)

THE FELCHERS / ZOOMEN – split CD

The inside cover of this features a collage of photos of men with long hair with their legs spread wide, makin' sweet lurve to their axes; the eternal epic rock dude pose. The charmingly named FELCHERS hail from Germany, they do a REAL KIDS cover and a DEAD MOON one too, they wear MC5 and SONIC RENDEVOUS BAND shirts. Why, they must be the living embodiment of rock 'n' roll! I think they probably also like TURBONEGRO. The ZOOMEN are from France and screech their way through some less balls-to-the-wall but more punked out rock 'n' roll with the most screeched, treble-y vocals, which sound like they were recorded by a singing blender in places. (LG)

(Zero Control, 6 Rue Casteret, 31300 Toulouse, FRANCE)

FINAL SOLUTIONS – "Return to the Motherland" EP

These guys I've always kind of considered the quintessential *Killed by Death*-type band currently lurking on the scene, so on here they up and go all, "Yah, fuck you too sailor" in my face with the salami breath and the bugged eyes and the *oi vey*. Rather than covering the FUN THINGS for the 30th time, these guys opted for covering some of the more obscure *Killed by Death* stalwarts like the former Yugoslavia's PEKINSKA PASKA and Sweden's KRIMINELLA GUITARRER, and the results are *sehr schnell* and bracing like a good slap in the chops. Perhaps they are aware that KRIMINELLA GUITARRER have a comp CD out and a website now, so they should better leave a little on the side for a fat royalty check, perhaps. I still find the royalty-seeking story of the MIRRORS vs. Bag of Hammers for the MONOSHOCK cover hi-larious. (RW)

(Frick & Frack, 150 Lafayette St, Memphis, TN 38111)

FIVE DAYS OFF – "Deerfoot Trail" CD

Fine early-'90s-ish SoCal style stuff from Belgium. FIVE DAYS OFF would sound right at home as an early Hopeless or Fearless Records band with their LAGWAGON-esque harmonies and guitar riffs. I hear a little DIGGER and PULLEY in their sound as well. Not bad. (JF)

(Funtime, Vlasselaar 13, Nieuwrode (Holsbeek), BELGIUM)

FORÇA MACABRA – "Ao Vivo No Japáo – 2001" EP

Six live tunes recorded in 2001 in Japan from the Finnish masters of Brazilian styled speed and thrash. Nothing has changed about FORÇA MACABRA—they are still ripping out the old speed metal riffage you love and need, so if you like the past recordings you are sure to be stoked on this seven-incher. Red wax to boot. (NE)

(No Fashion HC, Caixa Postal 03–CEP, 13450-970, Santa Barbara D'Ceste/SP, BRAZIL)

FOR THE WORSE – "Non Compos Mentis, Vol. 1" EP

This is an EP of two live recordings from when this Boston band played on Radiobeat 88.9 FM. The music is pretty good for live hardcore standards, and the song writing is solid enough to hold my interest. The vocalist has a weird range that jumps around from high-pitched screams to lower-pitched talking. There is no lyric sheet, but the studio banter pretty much explains what most songs are about, which cover anything from hating Christians to keeping the working man down. (CC)

(FNS, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130)

THE FOUR SLICKS – "56 Jewel" EP

Four songs of greaser punk with songs of cars and rocking. This band may include a darker-haired Jon Von, going by the grainy photo. Four energetic tunes for the party crowd. (RL)

(Rapid Pulse, www.fourslicks.com)

FREE DIAMONDS – "There Should Be More Dancing" CD

Probably, but when you get to my age, your knees and hips start to hurt. Regardless, as far as I can tell, this trio is comprised of Brits, which makes perfect sense. They channel the quirky sound (rhythm heavy, clean guitar) and structures of the MINUTEMEN into an early '80s new-wave sensibility. Kind of like HAYZEE FANTAZEE, or the DOLLY MIXTURES covering "Punchline." And trying to turn it into a dance record. It works pretty good too, I reckon. (RK)

(Deep Elm, www.deepelm.com)

FUCK ME DEAD – "Humanize Me" EP

This is an awesome 7". It kind of reminds me of CAREER SUICIDE vocally but the

music is less thrashed out and more snotty punk sounding. There's a definite early '80s SoCal sound to it, which I guess is the thing to do nowadays. It's hard sometimes to write about why you like music, like what is the exact equation that raises something from being generic to being something that grabs you? And how do you put that into words? Anyway, I like this, it sounds somewhere between punk and hardcore, and it's got the right measures of snottiness and sincerity. (LG)
(Clarence Thomas, www.bistrodistro.com)

GLORIOUS DAY – "Never Say Surrender" EP
The opening chords had me thinking HÜSKER DÜ, the STRIKE, and JAWBREAKER, all in the space of ten seconds or so. Now that I'm further into the record I'm not sure I'd change my initial evaluation. This is very strong, solid, mid-tempo punk with rough earnest vocals, good choruses, nice back-ups, and lots of hooks and melody. The flip is a slower, longer song about going off to war and getting killed for no reason other than furthering some politician's agenda. Actually the lyrics are very good, political without preaching. This is a very strong release. (AD)
(Out Of Time, PO Box 24692, Seattle, WA 98124)

GOOD TIME CHARLIES – "Gentlemen Letting Off Stream" CD
Punk rock of the local tavern variety. Immediately brings to mind an early, less rootsy LAZY COWGIRLS, which is about the highest compliment that a band with this sound and vibe could be paid. The lyrics sorta veer too much toward the "I'm A Rock'N'Roll God" school for my liking, but they somehow manage to come across as much more genuine than the vast majority of their peers...then and now. I doubt I'll be reaching for this CD that many more times, but this isn't total crap. What a surprise! (MC)
(zerocontrol.propagande.org)

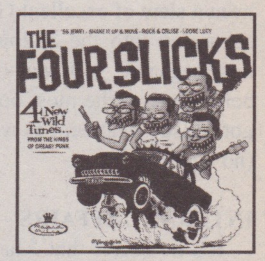
GORILLA ANGREB – "Bedre Tider" 12"
I think GORILLA ANGREB may have lost a few fans with their last 7" where they slowed down and cleaned up their sound quite a bit. But I loved that record and I like this one a lot too. People used to compare them to X, which I thought was way off the mark, but with this record they've definitely caught up with the comparison. One opening riff sounds just like "Los Angeles"! On this 12" there's more care taken with the vocal harmonies and they've added more production value, even throwing in some piano bits. And although I have to admit that I enjoy GORILLA ANGREB's oldest stuff the most, I look forward to—and enjoy—everything they've done. They're a unique and exciting band that isn't afraid to change their style, have totally bizarre record cover art, never sing in English, and not live up to people's expectations—and yet they are still fundamentally a bare-bones, truly punk rock band. For the uninitiated, this is slow-to mid-tempo male/female singer punk in a weird hybrid of Danish and early California sounds. And it rules! (PC)
(Kick N' Punch, PO Box 604, 2200 København N, DENMARK, www.kicknpunch.com)

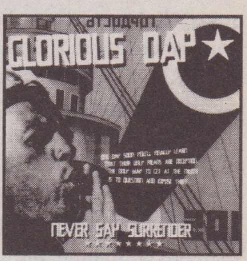
HATEFUL – "Diamond Among the Coal" CD
Snotty punk from these Jocks (and I don't mean the guys who play sports and beat up our readers at high school) from Clydebank, outside Glasgow, with a nice anthemic '77 feel. The closest reference point I can think of is COCK SPARRER, and like COCK SPARRER they don't hold back on the hooks, harmonies, or choruses. This is great! I don't mean to sound surprised but if you had to wade through the shite that is the CDs that come in for review here, then you'd know what I mean. "Backstabber" is an instant classic. I read a review online that compared them to STATUS QUO! I can see that, though the more I listen to this I can't help thinking of the mighty SLOPPY SECONDS. They also write some beautiful lyrics, for example on the song "Twat" they sing "...You're like a dose of scabies, I've got you under my skin..." Now that's poetry. This is the first thing that's cheered me up since Liverpool got put out of the Champion's League last night. Fuck, punk is great isn't it? Anyone can do it... (AD)
(Rebellion, www.rebellionrecords.nl)

HEADACHE CITY – LP
Melancholic, garage-y punk with new-wave keyboard accentuation. The songwriting is strong—potentially catchy but dark pop numbers that are perfect for driving around a rainy city late at night. The first song on the flip, "Suicide Summer," with its hooky chorus, could be an instant hit. The songs are delivered with such slack-jawed ennui and disengagement, however, that they lose much of their power. I know they're probably going for that "we can't be bothered" feel (especially with the Mark E. Smith inspired vox) but there's such a thing as taking it too far. Seriously, I had to check to make sure I was playing this at the right speed. It plods. I'm not saying they need to play faster, they just need to sound like they're into it. It's a shame because this could be a great record. I'm not giving up on this though—maybe after a few more listens I'll "get it." (AM)
(Shit Sandwich, 1400 S Elmwood, Berwyn, IL 60402, www.shitsandwichrecords.com)

HEARTBREAK STEREO – CDEP
Street punks from Finland holding their own in an increasingly overpopulated, watered-down scene. Not my thing, but I can respect conviction and talent nonetheless. Solid and true to the old street punk rough-and-ready ethos. Hooks and choruses to boot, confidently played with enough fist-in-the-air moments to raise this above the sea of mediocrity that plagues this scene. Old RANCID, SWINGING UTTERS, and BOMBSHELL ROCKS all come to mind. (SD)
(www.heartbreakstereo.com)

HIBAKUSHA – "Morula" CD
Speedy grind/hardcore from the Czech Republic. The pace of this record is relentless, never dropping below fast and also toying around with really fast and fucking fast. Some of this gets a bit repetitive and monotonous by the end of the 15-song duration but nonetheless, these guys know what they're doing and they do it well. Good vocal trade-offs, some nice metallic riffing and plenty of intensity too. Not too shabby. (EL)
(Killing Art, M. Letocha, PO Box 97, 735 14 Orlova, CZECH, hiba@seznam.cz)





HOME BLITZ – "Apocalyptic Grades" EP

One of the toughest things to pull off in the indie-punk world is pulled off on this little record with ease: a naïve, sloppy mess that feels totally sincere. I cannot emphasize enough how putting this EP through a more professional "filter" would render it absolutely pedestrian. This record is pure magic, like a fly on the wall at a practice space session that absolutely nailed it for one special moment, but without any witnesses. However! There are approximately 200 possible witnesses for this fragile combination of the CUTS, ROCK 'N' ROLL ADVENTURE KIDS, and your-band-the-night-you-had-it-but-the-drummer-quit-and-you-never-quite-had-it-again. (RW)
(no address)

INFERNO – "Tod & Wahnsinn" LP

A nice looking "reissue" of German classic *Tod & Wahnsinn* by INFERNO, their first full-length. Like many of their early '80s German brethren, INFERNO combined gruff, catchy songs with a proto-hardcore, almost street punk sensibility, though INFERNO was definitely faster and more hardcore than bands like SLIME. I have a real soft spot for old Deutsch-punk—the best of it combines the fury of hardcore with the anthemic qualities of the UK82/early Oi sound—and this LP is no different, though it is somewhat generic. From the well known to the incredibly obscure, there has been a slew of excellent German punk reissues streaming into the hallowed review room of this magazine, so it was only a matter of time before one of the most popular German bands got reissue treatment as well. Solid. (GN)
(no address)

INTERNAL AFFAIRS – "You're Dead" CD

It's no secret that I have soft spot for this Los Angeles straight edge band. Since their 2003 demo, Corey's singing style has changed somewhat on this full length, but his unabashed hatred and rage have not left. INTERNAL AFFAIRS has gone through some significant line-up changes since then, including the valuable addition of Todd Jones (CARRY ON, BETRAYED, TERROR) on lead guitar. Like the their older material, this LP carries a strong hooligan vibe; with lyrics that hover mainly around familiar topics of brotherhood, pride, and loyalty screamed over fast, thrashy hardcore with the occasional huge breakdown. Now, I admit that this isn't the most original record that I've heard, and I definitely have to be in the right mindset for this. But when the mood strikes, there is simply no other full length out there can satisfy the straight edge brute inside me. I challenge you to find a band that effectively melds an in-your-face, straight edge attitude with intensely fast hardcore like INTERNAL AFFAIRS. There are none. (CC)
(www.malfunctionrecords.com)

THE GRIZZLY TWISTER / PLAGUE SERMON – split EP

GRIZZLY TWISTER unleashes competent scream-job, masturbatory, post-hardcore with subtle nods to SOME GIRLS and ANGEL HAIR—laden with truly bizarre melodies and song structures that will leave your mouth dry and mind blank. The PLAGUE SERMON side is a good listen loaded with heavy, epic intros, and manic screamed emotional "crazy" parts. Hurts, but doesn't leave a mark. (BS)
(Midmarch, midmarchrecords.com)

JEFFREY NOVAK ONE MAN BAND – "Fire in the Hole" EP

It must be exceptionally frustrating playing trashed out rock 'n' roll in 2006 when you are from Tennessee. The name this sound immediately brings to mind is Jay Reatard. If I didn't have this record cover sitting in front of me, I could have easily thought it was a new REATARDS disc. And those are some big shoes to fill. The truly original and impressive thing JEFFREY NOVAK has going for him is that he manages to make all this racket as a one-man band. The back cover states "recorded live (no overdubs)." If that is really true (sorry to be so cynical, but how does he do it?), it's pretty amazing. Most drummers can't keep up this kind of energy playing only drums, never mind while playing guitar and singing too. Cool songs and awe-inspiring musicianship. That's all I need. (CK)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY)

JIGSORE TERROR – "World End Carnage" LP

This LP was recorded by the late Mieszco Talarczyk of NASUM fame, so I'm not taking a stab in the dark by saying this sounds fucking killer. JIGSORE TERROR starts off with a little CARCASS sounding intro then busts into some fast Swedish sounding death metal akin to BLOODBATH. A lot of the cuts on here have mid-paced riffs that break into fast grinding blast beat assaults, which give the band an old school death metal feel. The only thing that really gets to me is the down-tuned nü-metal breakdown that pops up in every other song, but I guess it comes with the territory. 15 songs and a FURBOWL cover. (NE)
(Power It Up, Zum Holzfelde 12 31226 Peine, GERMANY)

KAAOS – "Ismit" LP

This is an LP reissue of the undeniably classic 10" released originally by Fight Records in 2001. A brutal punk party of Finnish style debauchery, this band lives up to their name in every way, and I can't help but love every minute of it. Awesome, fast, and noisy drumming, screaming guitar and bass, and shouts of the final collapse. As most already know, this is the more polished era of KAAOS, but it still contains tons of venom and punch—nothing really compares to the raw genius of this band. "Pysähdy Maailma" is my personal favorite of this record, it has the fucking perfect melody. This record also contains some really awesome comp tracks and comes in a nice gatefold cover, which features some rad pictures and lyrics in Finnish and English. If you are punk and don't enjoy this, get the fuck out! This is essential. (WK)
(Assel, Groner Landstr. 48 37081 Goettingen, GERMANY www.assel-records.de)

KAMIKATZE – "Chrille P" LP

Five-song, all-girl German street-influenced hardcore on a one-sided 12" that is fairly pedestrian for the four punk songs, but that totally blew my mind for song five with "disco remix" of the second song, "I Hate Kids." Less "disco" and more weird electro-clash hipster fuckery, it was pretty much the nail in the coffin for this otherwise OK but instantly forgettable record.
(Dirty Faces, Universitätsstr 16, 44789 Bochum, GERMANY, www.dirtyfaces.de)

KIDNAPPERS – "Neon Signs" LP

The return of this punk rock and roll band. Bar chords a-plenty with a little power pop in the mix. A mix of SAINTS-like punk and JOHNNY THUNDERS with a little more speed. A solid release here from this top notch German band. (RL)
(Rip Off)

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE – "Grey" CD

When I was a youngster (more than 20 years ago) I bought everything I could find on Crass (and Corpus Christi) Records—the 7" EPs were all like 25p and easily affordable with your allowance without having to dip into your cider and glue money—and somehow I ended up with basically everything the label put out…except for the LACK OF KNOWLEDGE records. So, here I am finally listening to them all this time later, far, far away from gloomy, post-industrial, Thatcher-led Britain. I probably wouldn't have liked this when I was 13, as it sounds a lot like JOY DIVISION and I didn't like JOY DIVISION back then, being the little hardcore fundamentalist anarcho-punk Nazi that I was. They weren't hard or political enough for me, and I probably thought they were tainted by the music biz, or something like that. I missed a lot of great music thinking

like that. These days, I'd much rather listen to JOY DIVISION than, say, CONFLICT—hell, I'd probably rather listen to the SMITHS than CONFLICT to tell you the truth. Anyway, that's beside the point, LACK OF KNOWLEDGE (I assume named after the VIOLENT FEMMES song…or the biblical quotation—Hosea 4:16…there you go) formed in and around Edmonton in North London in 1978/79. Influenced by CRASS and the other anarcho-punk bands of the day, as well as what would later be called "post punk" they released the *Grey* EP on the Crass label in 1983, and an album, *Sirens Are Back*, on Corpus Christi in 1984. The album's a little more upbeat and less gloomy than the EP, and it sounds like they ditched the keyboards, which was probably a good idea. This is a very nicely packaged document of a good band that was part of a great period in music. I don't know…it's tough trying to get into this stuff while being in sunny California in 2006; this kind of music, more than any other, belongs to not only a place and time but a state of mind that existed at that time—the Miner's Strike, the Falklands War, the arm's race, inner city riots, and chronic unemployment, not to mention the crappy weather… Actually, maybe times haven't changed that much. (AD)
(Southern, PO Box 59, London N22 1AR, UNITED KINGDOM)

LAWRENCE ARMS – "Oh Calcutta" CD
I've never actually heard these guys before. I'd heard of them sure, but never actually sat down and listened to them. They'd signed to Fat before I got the chance, and I'm way to cool listen to bands on Fat Wreck Chords. I was told they sounded like JAWBREAKER but this is more like AGAINST ME! (are we officially allowed to call AGAINST ME! wankers now?) I thought it was going to be really polished and…em, musician-y, but it's pretty much yer run-of-the-mill bog-standard emotional pop-punk. Actually, there are a couple of songs that are pretty darn good, especially track three. I'm sorry if I mention AMERICAN STEEL in just about every bloody review I write but that's the benchmark for this kind of music…if it sounds anything like those first two AMERICAN STEEL records—and I've tried to listen to *Communique*, I really have, but it's simply not the same—then you're in…and the third track sounds like AMERICAN STEEL. The rest is growing on me, so thumbs up. I'm still a little disappointed though; the liner notes thank NAKED RAYGUN and NOMEANSNO and this doesn't sound anything like NAKED RAYGUN or NOMEANSNO. Track four is really good too… Minutes pass, I'm up to track seven, and this still sounds all right. I might have to give something on Fat (or "Frat" as we witty punk snobs often refer to that label as) a good review. Now am I going to go see the LAWRENCE ARMS next time the come through town? Not on your nelly. (AD)
(Fat Wreck, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119)

LEFT FOR DEAD – "Live" LP
Much as I like LEFT FOR DEAD, do we need a live LP of their reunion show? I would have to say no. The recoding is fine, the band is tight and ripping, but I'll stick with the studio gear thanks. The sounds? Basically HAYMAKER with the dude from RUINATION singing… You know: heavy, slightly metallic no-frills hardcore. Good shit, but unnecessary except for the 400 people who were at the show or rabid fans. (TB)
(Deranged, www.derangedrecords.com)

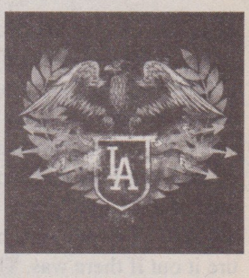
LIFETIME – "Somewhere in the Swamps of Jersey" CD
A double disc of rarities and remixes from this more-popular-than-ever combo. Included are the *Background* LP, the *Lifetime* 7", *Tinnitus* 7", remixes and live tracks. A good deal for those who don't have all the collectibles from LIFETIME's early days. (RL)
(Jade Tree)

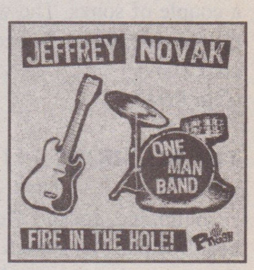
LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER / OVERPOWERING – split EP
Drum machine grinders OVERPOWERING shred through six songs of raging grind sounding a little like PHROSTHIC CUNT with a killer recording minus the slew of samples. The vocals are pissed and yelled, sounding like most power violence vocals. LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER—like OVERPOWERING—come at you from Spain and shred your fucking face off with five gnarly death-grinding rippers. The production on this side is so fucking heavy it is mind blowing, the vocals are brutal, guttural lows with harsh, throaty highs, and the music is fucking fast non-stop down-tuned bliss. All that with a sick drummer who knows how to play more than one kind of blast beat and songs short enough to hold my attention makes this split fucking good enough for me to be sitting here wishing they sent doubles of it. (NE)
(Power It Up, Zum Holzfelde 12 31226, Peine, GERMANY)

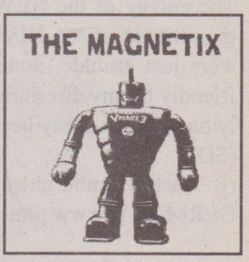
MAGNETIX – "Time After Time / Fiend of Time"
A nice mix of basic garage instincts shot through with a desire not to merely ape one's sources, but to stand upon their shoulders and reach for the stars, baby. So the elements of a very basic trad group are employed to create an almost psychedelic experience, especially on the flip side track. Maybe it's my pre-flu sticky brain talking, but this is great, perhaps just today. This thing is too short, I'm going to go dig out their 10" and listen to that again…this 7" is a fucking *tease*. (RW)
(Nasty Product)

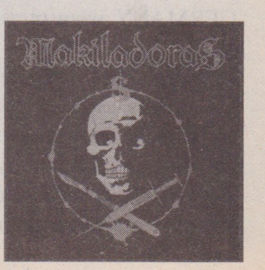
THE MAGGOTS – "Nobody Loves the Hulk / Take It Off"
Swedes playing it simple, stickin' to the garage formula with absolutely no intention of straying too far from the retro herd. Suits me fine—two solid tunes, one a straight garage standard, the other a frat boy romp. Expect no sucker punches on this platter, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. (SD)
(Bootleg Booze, PO Box 89, 671 22 Arvika, SWEDEN, www.themaggots.com)

MAKILADORAS – "In Eigen Hand" CD
A Japanese-released CD collection of this crusty political Dutch band's 10" EP, recent full-length LP, and split 7" with RADIO BIKINI. The lyrics and imagery are very









anarcho, though there are very metallic guitar parts all throughout the body of their recorded work. The LP has a fuller sound, with the vocals sounding more aggressive. Not too sure how available this will be out of Japan, but it is a fine digital collection for fans who missed out on the vinyl. (GN)
(Too Circle, 221-3 Hi-home Kodaira 510, Nakemachi Kodaira-City #187-0042, Tokyo, JAPAN)

MANGINA – "Mdy Mdy Mudshark" EP
Uh, this band evidently features a member of KAJUN SS but you'd never know it from the poorly recorded crusty hardcore on this one-sided EP. Crusty thrash parts, thrashy grind parts, and grindy thrash parts all combine for an overall mess of a listen; I'm not sure if there is a "joke" element to this band, but I couldn't figure it out if there was. There are about a zillion inserts in this one too, and a CD-R that features a couple of songs. The white vinyl is screened on one side, which I have to admit looks pretty cool. (GN)
(Jeth Row)

THE MANIKINS – "Lie Cheat and Steal" CD
Galloping, rocked out, melodic punk, with healthy hints of a garage beat and that '77 kick. Taking on the sway and swagger of RANDY, which being fellow countrymen is no surprise. The energy of the NEW BOMB TURKS and the attitude of the HIVES before the HIVES were just attitude. Sometimes a bit too radio friendly for my discriminating ear, but definitely has a place in my hectic punk rock lifestyle. (SD)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY, www.ptrashrecords.com)

THE MANIKINS – "The World That Was Once Ours / I'm a Pretender"
I'll just come right out and say it: this is my new favorite band. I've only heard these two songs, but they're definitely my new favorite band. I need to make it quick so that I can run out and buy this one. This is incredibly catchy power pop. It includes an EXPLODING HEARTS cover. I'm guessing it's not the first and it surely won't be the last. Great record and it looks like it's limited to 500, so you better hurry. (KK)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY, www.ptrashrecords.com)

MIKA BOMB – "Hellcats" CD
Garagey, almost primitive female-fronted punk rock from Tokyo that is played with enthusiasm. Personally I like the broken English vocals but a friend of mine said that the singers voice was irritating and the lyrics dumb. I say they are dumb in a good punk rock kind of way. Good but not essential. This would be way better on vinyl. (JF)
(Damaged Goods)

MIND CONTROLS – "Take a Message" LP
A welcome return to no-bones-about-it punk by Mark Sultan, he of SPACESHITS, SEXAREENOS, and BBQ fame, and some DEMON'S CLAWS folk. Different from his previous outings in that there are virtually no leans to times of yore, unless you count punk with raw, fuzzy guitars with all kindsa hooks a thing of the past, which it might well be. I'm all smiles. MIND CONTROLS apparently formed, wrote and recorded this LP in a matter of hours, but every tune kills, so they must've done something right. Like anything else outta this lot, essential. A picture disc version is also available on P. Trash Records, with a couple of exclusive tunes. (MC)
(Dirtnap, 2615 SE Clinton, Portland, OR 97202

MISFITS – "Dec. 20 '78" LP
For all the MIFITS fanatics around the world, here is another questionable sounding live set from '78. I will say that the songs are performed way fucking cleaner than I ever remember hearing in a MISFITS live recording, probably because they were down one football player at the time. I can't help but wonder how many bootlegs can possibly be produced by one band? I give this one a 7 out of 10—the songs are some of their best, other than the Christmas fucking Elvis song, which thankfully only last 15 seconds. The recording is not too atrocious, but I would still rather listen to the *Bullet* EP instead. Classic punk for sure, and that is why the boots keep on coming. (WK)
(no address)

THE MISTREATERS – "Live Like You" EP
…..it's really refreshing to hear such a fucked up guitar sound coming from a modern rock 'n' roll band!!!!!!! These days every band goes for that Guitar Center sound…..!!!!! Dull, ain't it?! I can't wait until really shitty guitars go trendy again!!!!! THE MISTREATERS are pretty bad ass—ugly bearded gutter rock with foreskins full of duck butter!!!! High energy rock 'n' roll with strange acid casualty garage production…I still can't get over the drug damaged jack-hammer guitars..!!!!! Music to play while squatting naked over road cones!!! (SW)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649, Bielefeld, GERMANY, www.ptrashrecords.com)

MONITORS – "Electric Knife" EP
Not to be confused with the vintage Bay Area electro band MONITER, these guys dish out the keyboard new wave with a little trash. Fun and lyrically wacky with that garage spirit. (RL)
(Fungus Boy, www.fungusboy.net)

MONSTER SQUAD – "All Out of Control" EP
UK82 by way of Vacaville, California! I love this sound, and this band is pretty damn good. They sound like a slower ABRASIVE WHEELS or DEAD WRETCHED with chanted backups. Not as urgent as ACTION from Canada or accomplished as COMPLETE CONTROL but much better than the CASUALTIES. Decent. (TB)
(Glue Rot, PO Box 1857, El Cerrito, CA 94530)

MONSTER SQUAD – "Strength Through Pain" LP
Hell yes! These Vacaville, California punks come to clean house on this raging disc! Jake and his Charged Records, from New Jersey, have served up another high energy, spiky-haired dose of fast and furious punk rock for you cretins! MONSTER SQUAD has been steadily making a significant thrash name for themselves on the West Coast. Soon, these "bristles and studs" men will be a household name throughout the United States. The guitars surge on relentlessly. The vocals nail down good lyrics on tunes such as "Till the End," "No Destiny," "Nihilistic," "Death and Destruction" and the title cut, "Strength Through Pain." Fans of the FORGOTTEN should buy this immediately! (BR)
(Charged Records, PO Box 3118, Jersey City, NJ 07303, www.chargedrecords.com)

NAVIES – "An Estate" 12"
This bass-less trio are from Washington DC and combine some of the experimental, rhythmic elements of their compatriots like BLACK EYES and Q AND NOT U, picking up the torch abandoned by FUGAZI somewhere around *Steady Diet of Nothing*. The vocals especially betray a fondness for the passionate inflections of Mr. Guy Picciotto. There are only five songs on this twelve-incher that plays at 33 rpm: from that technical info you can glean that the songs are too fucking long. Apart from that, it all sounds great. (AM)
(Yosada, PO Box 1581, Boise, ID 83701, www.yosada.com)

NEUROOTTIISET PELIMANNIT – "Putkassa" EP
I have been following this band since the beginning, and have dug their other two releases. This Finnish outfit delivers a great early hardcore sound to the punks. This is a good release here; I'm a huge fan of their first EP, which kicked my fucking ass, and though this

record is not as urgent it's still way worth picking up. "Seela" is a killer track and my favorite of the bunch. The band makes attacks on capitalism, homophobia, and other society and world ills. If put in a time warp, NEUROOTTIISET PELIMANNIT could have easily been featured on the classic *Russia Bombs Finland* or *Hardcore '83*, or on any one of those old Finnish compilations. (MS)
(Assel, **www.assel-records.de**)

NEUROTIC SWINGERS – "Sexy and Mysterious" CD

Spunky, fast, catchy, and garage-y punk from France. Formerly described in these very pages as "the HIVES hanging out with the BRIEFS," this is their second album. They received a lot of acclaim for the first one, and I'm sure this one will go down well as well. (AD)
(Lollipop, 7 Impasse Monsegur, 13016 Marseille, FRANCE)

NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD – "Don't Believe" CD

I like this band. They manage to hover in that KID DYNAMITE, PAINT IT BLACK, could-almost-be-on-Fat type of sound but manage to maintain the intensity by keeping it urgent and driving. There are also hints of Ian MacKaye both in some vocal styling and also some MINOR THREAT-style riffs. Sure they will be on pretty big package tours, sure the kids love 'em, but fuck it—this is a pretty ripping disc. (TB)
(Jade Tree, www.jadetree.com)

NINE DAYS TO NO ONE – "Ark" CD

Six tracks of hyperactive, screamy metalcore. Technically this is executed very well and if you're a fan of technical hardcore (what does that even mean?) like later NEUROSIS, ISIS, or DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN you'll probably like this. I don't. (AM)
(Engineer, 210 William St, Boonton, NJ 07005, info@engineerrecords.com)

NO DOGSBODY – "Dirty Bomb" CD

I had my hopes up for this since it's from my one-time home, Wichita, KS! But as with Wichita itself, one should not get ones hopes up too much… First of all, I have a pet peeve about bands with lyrics that sound cool but mean absolutely nothing. This CD is chock-full of lines like, "There is no solution and only time to kill / Can you use your illusion like a radio pill?" What the fuck is that? The music has the same kind of quality in that it seems cool, but there's really nothing there. Basic, sneering punk 'n' roll, like a slower BRIEFS. I'm sure that after about 14 PBRs at Kirby's these guys might sound like the shit, but in CD format it fails to excite. (PC)
(www.nodogsbody.com)

NOFX – "Never Trust a Hippy" CD

A six-song EP here from the Fat boys. At this point, you should know what you're getting from NOFX, although I can't help thinking they're branching out stylistically on some of these tracks. Still the same smartass, snotty, but on-point lyrics. I know that you're supposed to hate NOFX for the destruction their influence has wrought on the modern punk landscape but I can't bring myself to dislike them. They're too damn good. (AM)
(Fat Wreck, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690, www.fatwreck.com)

NO IDOLS – "Low (Swing the Pyramid Hands)" CD

Damn, this started out with a low rumbling mess of feedback and I thought for sure the band was going to sound like GODHEADSILO. Instead, as soon as the second track kicked in I realized this was going to be another boring hardcore band. This is slick, nicely produced mid-tempo hardcore with lots of big beefy riffs and harshly screamed vocals. They try to come across as dark and brooding, but it just seems forced and boring. And on their one sheet they say that the band is "for fans of QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE." I think that says it all...no thanks! (RC)
(Hex, 201 Maple Ln., North Syracuse, NY 13212)

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS – "Hospitals" 12"

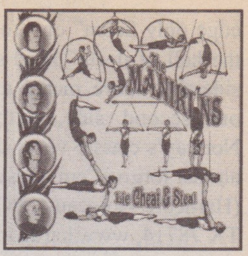
Oh, fuck yes! OFF WITH THEIR HEADS has stepped up to the plate and delivered a record that rocks with the passion of a thousand Alamo House basement shows. Imagine a stronger MODERN MACHINES, mixed with some DILLINGER 4, and then throw in a healthy dose of RIVETHEAD (which this band is ex-members of) and you have OFF WITH THEIR HEADS. There is something wonderful and totally punk about jumping up and down while singing songs about misery and sorrow with a smile on your face. This record is so recommended that I can almost guarantee will be on my year-end top ten and it is only March. (JF)
(Rock Bottom, 248 McKibbin St, Brooklyn, NY 11206)

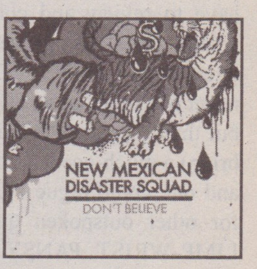
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS – "Hospitals" 12"

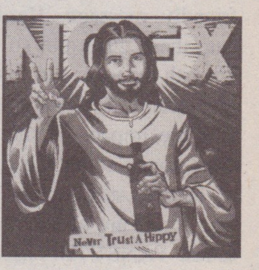
Wow…just when I'd almost given up hope of ever reviewing another good new record in comes OFF WITH THEIR HEADS. From Minneapolis, OWTH sounds like DILLINGER 4 or CLEVELAND BOUND DEATH SENTENCE with a rougher, almost street-punk edge. The record comes in a nice screen-printed cover, which I must say led me to believe I had some discordant screamo in store…but thankfully not. This has hooks and harmonies galore without losing any punch; no shit, the first D4 and AMERICAN STEEL albums are the closest reference points I can think of. It's a pity that there's only eight songs on this, I didn't want it to end. Good lyrics too. Superb. (AD)
(Rock Bottom, 248 McKibbin St. Brooklyn, NY 11206)

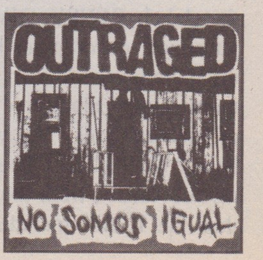
ORDRENEKT – "Guddommelig Incest" LP

With an unimaginative swipe of the TOTALITÄR *Mulitnationalla Mordare* cover on the sleeve, you'd expect serious Scandinavian hardcore devastation…this Norwegian band meets you half way. Reminiscent of the solid mid- to late-'80s also-rans of European hardcore or the "okay" metal LP that followed most '80s Euro bands' blazing hardcore single, a chassis of punchy straight-forward hardcore cracks with offhand metallic solos under the strain of a recording that seems puzzled by the intent. The lyrics are blunt anti-war, anti-Bush, anti-religion statements, but then slip in an occasional "You acknowl-









edge only Satan" or "You long to be naked in the hall of death" head-scratcher. On the considerably more meaty and speed-metal riffed out second side, with vocals howled in Norway's classic vocal delivery style, you can almost forgive 'em. (KS)
(Hardcore Holocaust, PO Box 143403, Austin, TX 78714, www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

OUTRAGED – "No Somos Igual" EP

Possibly the most ripping single of this issue. Super fast, abrasive Latino hardcore from the California wasteland. Mostly sung (screamed) in Spanish, the LOS CRUDOS comparisons are inevitable and fair, I think. What really makes this record, apart from the absolutely smoking tunes, is the super rough recording, which gives it an added out-of-control element. (TB)
(Lengua Armada)

PANSY DIVISION – "The Essential Pansy Division" CD

So right now I'm preparing a little presentation I'm giving at CalArts college about the history of *Maximum Rocknroll*. I'm trying to tie together different trends in punk music over the years, and I get to the early '90s where I want to talk about the emergence of awesome non-white-hetero-male punk bands like BIKINI KILL and LOS CRUDOS…but who to represent the queers? Oh, I'll just go see what I have to review and come back to it… And what's this? An answer to my query (pun intended)!… PANSY DIVISION may have never had much of an influence on punk *music*, but they sure as hell brought (and continue to bring) a much-needed voice to our community, and one could argue that they paved the way for other outspoken queer punk bands like LIMP WRIST. PANSY DIVISION's accessible, poppy, vocal-driven tunes perfectly juxtapose their way-out-of-the-closet queer-sex-friendly message. Hardcore punks probably hate these guys, but so what? They're a huge hit with the teenagers at Gilman, and when you think about it, that's gonna have a much more tangible impact on the world than any more crust songs about the fucking system (which, of course, still sucks—don't get me wrong). The songs are all simple but well-crafted pop tunes. PANSY DIVISION have always just described themselves as a *rock* band, but their unabashedly honest, basic, DIY style belies that label. PANSY DIVISION is a raw, in-your-face, queer punk band—albeit one that my mom loves as well. (Can you imagine your mom singing along to "We're the buttfuckers of rock and roll / We wanna sock it to your hole"? Well I can.) This collection is a "best of," obviously, from their 15-years of releases thus far. It also includes a DVD with a live show, a TV appearance, and seven videos (including one with a very hard-to-spot, underwater appearance by yours truly!). Well done, guys—you make me proud! (PC)
(Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141, alternativetentacles.com)

PARKWAY WRETCH – "Homesick" CD

Whoa, did somebody just unearth an unreleased recording from some unknown East Bay/Gilman Street group from the late '80s? Oh wait, PARKWAY WRETCH is a current band and they are actually from Arizona. These guys are trying hard to emulate bands like CRIMPSHINE and PINHEAD GUNPOWDER. And while they fall short of matching the quality of either one of those bands, in the end PARKWAY WRETCH can still jam out some tunes and should definitely appeal to fans of this genre. (RC)
(Formula Thirteen, PO Box 7385, Tempe, AZ 85281-0013, www.formula13.com)

PLASTIQUES – "101" CD

The PLASTIQUES name isn't all that appropriate, since there's nothing science-fictiony or mechanistic to their sound (me, I was picturing DEVO jumpsuits and novelty keyboards just like the EPOXIES or whatever other band it is that makes people wanna spike their thinning locks). Not at all. Rather, the PLASTIQUES are a confident hybrid of choppy KINKS tunes and a buzzing wind-tunnel SAINTS sound—it sounds good, it is good, and leaves me feeling emotionally satisfied and a better Music Fan for having heard it. Wordwise they're nothing special (it's all "girl you done me wrong") but the music itself is damned convincing. A real thrill. (JH)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY, www.ptrashrecords.com)

THE PLAYMOBILES – "International Lifestyle" CD

Fun, raw, rock 'n' roll in the vein of the HI-FIVES, or the more raw Rip Off bands and that ilk. You have to be really special in some way to pull off this kind of music, otherwise you can be fun, solid, rockin', and danceable, but ultimately unsatisfying. The PLAYMOBILES, unfortunately, are not all that special, but I think that I'd totally boogie to this band at a live show. Those of you that require *roll* with your rock might dig the hell outta this. (PC)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY, www.ptrashrecords.com)

PSEUDO EXISTORS – "Stamp Out Normality" LP

This is a reissue of the *Stamp Out Normality* EP, which was on one of those *Bloodstains Across Europe* comps I think. It also includes some live recordings and some unreleased studio recordings. The vocals are a little too nasal-y for me to take for an entire LP but I would definitely put songs on mix tapes. A couple of the songs—particularly "Coming Up for Air"—have a real proto-hardcore sound, seeing as this was recorded in '79. The review copy came with a copy of an old promo for the EP, a pin and a collage of goofy press releases and dismissive reviews, which made for a cool package. It also contextualized the band as part of the slew of small town, independent-spirited DIY punk bands that sprung up in the wake of '77 corporate sponsored punk. (LG)
(Harbinger Sound, PO Box 7133, Nottingham NG5 7WE, UNITED KINGDOM)

PURPLE WIZARD – "BBQ" EP

Three cool covers from a female-fronted garage band. The songs sound great and it's a fun record, but it seems like a lot of women are doing this kind of thing these days. (CK)
(Show and Tell, 7720 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60626, showandtellrecs@yahoo.com)

DAS PUSSYHOUND – "Was Is Das?" LP

Maybe it's the shit weather, but I just can't get into this megaphone-hollerin' blues-punk schmloozathon. The songs seem to plod, there are zero lyrics to react to, the whole thing seems like a perfunctory exercise. Nothing breaks up the sameness, it's like listening to someone hash out a release, then releasing the hash out instead. The kind of record that gets played once and shelved. (RW)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY, www.ptrashrecords.com)

RADIO BEATS – "Ready to Shake" 12"

When does a 12" become an LP? When you play it at 33 RPM? When it's got 12 songs? I just don't know. That doesn't make me useless, 'cause I'm here to tell you that this is a fucking rocker, whether it's a 12" or an LP. There is certainly a lot to like about this record. Mostly, though, I like it because it's really good. Jesus Christ, these guys come out of the gates rockin' and they just don't stop. They've got a great, fuzzy sound and were smart enough to cover the ANGRY SAMOANS. If you're a fan of punk rock that is faster paced, yet remains catchy, you owe it to yourself to search this one out. (KK)
(Big Neck, PO Box 8144, Reston, VA, 20195)

RAT TRAPS – "New Flesh" EP

The RAT TRAPS play ugly, trashy, distorted punk rock. I'll admit this blown-out, barely-in-tune style (especially the overly-distorted vocals) isn't usually my thing but there is more

than enough attitude and (dare I say) melody here to keep me interested. This fucking racket is music to my tired ears and it gets better with each listen. (CS)
(Shattered, www.shatteredrecords.net)

RAZZLE DAZZLE – 5" EP
These Detroit boys put five short songs of weed-influenced hi-jinks onto a yellow 5" platter. Sabbath riffs, fast hardcore, rapping—it's all on here. Fans of BEASTIE BOYS and MURPHY'S LAW should definitely take note. The perfect soundtrack to a very, very short party. (CC)
(Broken Glass, 1688 Fairway Dr, Jamison, PA 18929)

RECTANGLES – "Suspended Animation" EP
New wave punk from where I don't know where, as there is no info included on sleeve. The RECTANGLES feature a guy singer in the punkier EPOXIES and BRIEFS vein. This is a decent EP, but nothing overwhelming in this now crowded genre. Minus points for the "Nervous Breakdown" rip off. (RL)
(Discourage, www.discouragerecords)

REIGNING SOUND – "Black Sheep / Tennessee"
A perfect live recording of two tracks at Goner Records, Memphis. One is "Tennessee," by CARL PERKINS, the other I haven't got a clue. Country folk garage, bringing to mind the great PUBLIC NUISANCE and the LEAVES. This is a band that can't or won't put out a bad record. Another cruising winner from one of America's best bands. (SD)
(Norton, Box 646 Cooper Station, New York, NY10276, www.nortonrecords.com)

RESISTANT CULTURE – "Welcome to Reality" CD
Incorporating elements of crust, grind, death metal and hardcore, LA's RESISTANT CULTURE sound like a mix of PHOBIA, DISCHARGE, and SEPULTURA mixed with a strong emphasis on environmental and Native American lyrical topics. The guitar sound is insanely detuned on this, but the mix is pretty sterile and lifeless, especially on the clickety drum sound. The main problem here is inconsistency—some tracks positively destroy—opener "Hang On to Nothing," "Ecocide," and "Corruption" are brutal metallic assaults. But then there are the embarrassingly trite choruses of "Misery" and "Civilized Aggression" that make me cringe every time. And I'm sorry, but Native American chanting and metal just don't mix. There're some promising elements here, but the minuses outweigh the pluses for now. (EL)
(Spiral, www.spiralrecords.net)

REVEREND BEAT-MAN ONE MAN BAND – "Natchez Burning / Steh Auf Berlin"
…after all these years it's good to see that the LIGHTNING BEAT-MAN is still alive and ready to use his powerful German penis on our hungry little buttholes….!!!!! Only the BEAT-MAN would dare to cover HOWLIN' WOLF on one side and EINSTURZENDE NEUBAUTEN on the flip….!!!!!!! It's good to know that he's still taking the right drugs that one needs to produce music as splendid as this…..!!! We love you BEAT-MAN, oh yes we do…please do more drugs and booze for us, your loyal fans!!!!!! (SW)
(Squoodge, www.squoodge.de)

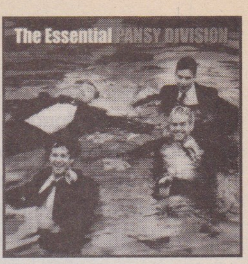
REV. SAVAGE & HIS HOLY ROLLERS –"God Is in My Garage" EP
If this is the sound of the new religious crusade than sign me up. Fast, loud, and rocking garage punk here. I can imagine a sacrament of hot dogs and whiskey would go well with the preaching that comes down from the REVEREND SAVAGE. Recommended for fans of P. Trash bands and those that are going to the Blackout fest or wished they had tickets for it. (JF)
(Squoodge, www.squoodge.de)

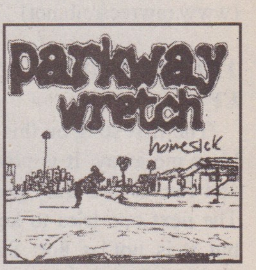
SCRIPTS – "Dim Stars" EP
Took some time, but this EP from last year finally dragged its ass in here. Great snarling take on the GERMS LP I say, gravel-voiced vocals over a super-basic punk chunk that was filling the void left by the then-dormant REATARDS upon this sucker's release. Four tracks, some are a little unfocused, but continues the long history of great 'n' gritty punk 'n' roll coming out of the Big Easy. Label has since relocated to Alabama, sigh. (RW)
($4.50 ppd. Jeth Row, 510 Company St., Wetumpka, AL 36092)

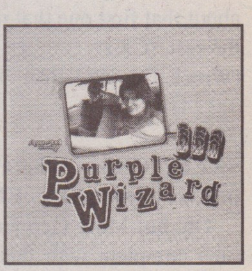
SEWN SHUT / UNHOLY GRAVE – split EP
This marks perhaps the first UNHOLY GRAVE where I was able to understand the lyrics for a second. Just a second, but it was a pretty special moment nonetheless. This also sees some of the better riff-writing from the Japanese grinders in quite a while and the production is absolutely perfect—super blown-out as always but much fuller and heavier than usual. Really, some of their best stuff yet and even includes a freakin' BATHORY cover too. Sweden's long-running noise-mongers SEWN SHUT resurface for the first time in a while with four tracks of their über-distorted noise-grind chaos. SEWN SHUT is a full-on blasting assault on the senses too, especially on the last track, "Lifeless," which sees a bit more diversity to the riffs. Quality stuff from both entities. (EL)
(Power it Up, Zum Holzfelde 12, 31226 Peine, GERMANY, www.power-it-up.de)

SHAKIN NASTIES – "Victim of Time" EP
Another hit single from the P. Trash conglomeration of catchy as fuck gassed in the garage punk trash. Obviously they only pressed five copies so by the time you read this it's already on eBay. Desperate sounding vocals? Check. Doomtown guitars? Check. It's super nasty sounding punk rock, will make you dance 'til you puke fer sure. (LG)
(P.Trash, www.shakinnasties.com)

THE SHADOW OF GOVERNMENT – "Guns of August" LP
Pried from the gravel pits of Iowa City, these folks lean toward the Saddle Creek (Omaha, NE) side of electronic-influenced homespun emotional diarrhea: dissonant, tuneless vocal choruses over occasionally interesting shoegaze-styled, atmospheric, and meandering soundscapes to get irreparably limp to. (BS)
(Scenester Credentials, PO Box 1275, Iowa City, IA 52244)







SILENTE BRUTUS – "Náo Caia de Amores Pelo Poder" EP

The singer sounds like a bird squawking and the vox are the loudest thing on this 7", the drummer is off time on almost all the songs, I can't hear the bass, and they play what sounds like a medley of thrash and screamo. I'm not a fan but if all that sounds good to you don't waste any more time reading this and go get it. (NE)
(www.rawrecs.cjb.net)

THE SIX STRING JETS – "Savage Beat" EP

The first song on this record "Savage Beat" blew me away. It is powerful, catchy, rockin' and fun. It is a truly great garage punk song. The next one tries to keep that feeling going, but it is not as hot. Side two continues the decline. All the songs have the same basic sound and style, but there is just something about that first one that makes it stick out from the rest. (CK)
(Wreck Em, PO Box 240701, Memphis, TN 38124)

SKEEZICKS – "There's a Charlie Brown in Every One of Us" EP

Oh, no! More German retro '80s punk, this time complete with fake Brian Walsby cover art! These guys have the generic thrash thing down to a tee; they must've really studied hard…oh, wait…this is a *real* generic '80s thrash band! Bolzkow has "reissued" this classic from 1986, with the original front cover and inside art—so yes, that's a real Brian Walsby cover (although he's not credited on this edition). I went back and listened to the original, just to compare quality, and it sounds pretty good. The problem is that they kinda fucked up and left out "Living in the Country"—which wasn't a great song but had a catchy chorus—and repeated the song "Stupid Questions" on both sides, which will fuck with your head if you don't figure that out right away. They make up for the mistake by including a damn good bonus track, "Trapped in Labels." (Remember when punks used to always sing about being labeled?) After listening to this record so many times trying to figure all this stuff out, I'm totally into it now. I would've absolutely *loved* this record if I had gotten it when it came out. It would've sat in my collection nicely alongside MINOR THREAT, 7 SECONDS, SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, and the *Nardcore* comp. (PC)
(Bolzkow, Lobuschstr. 37-39, D-22765 Hamburg, GERMANY)

SKIN DISORDER – "Scars and Stripes" EP

It's time for a fucking skinhead celebration! SKIN DISORDER from New York City USA has delivered the skinhead EP we have been waiting for! With the help of Carl Fritscher, (TEMPLARS), for recording and engineering and Armen, (WRETCHED ONES), for producing vinyl on Headache Records. SKIN DISORDER has issued a fucking skinhead masterpiece! The guys rip it up right from the get-go on side A with the title cut "Scars and Stripes!" Great! The second song keeps the momentum! "New York City" grabs you by the throat! Brilliant! Side B starts off on a melodic note on "Backstabber," with tasteful guitar playing. The song just builds and builds until you have a fucking full-force skinhead anthem of devastating proportions! The vocals on this record are right on the money! Song number four is "Soldier Skin." This song has a fluctuating time signature with powerful lyrics! This *Scars and Stripes* EP will put a smile on the face of every skinhead that comes in contact with it. Well done, SKIN DISORDER! (BR)
(Headache, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432, www.headacherecords.com)

SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN – "Magnetic Storm" EP

Fast and furious Israeli hardcore (featuring ex-members of DIR YASSIN) with radical political content and excellent artwork all ads up to a pretty exciting package on this ten-song 7" EP. It is hard for me to imagine being an anti-Zionist hardcore punk in the context of the current Israeli political climate, but SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN (which translates as "white and blue rag") gets their anger and frustration across pretty powerfully, with ten smart thrash anthems (with the occasional bass-led mid-tempo part) and thoughtful, incendiary lyrics. For the nerds: there is a blue vinyl version of this record, which comes handsomely housed in a limited white sleeve. Recommended. (GN)
(Lengua Armada, PMB #241, 530 Divisadero St, San Francisco, CA 94117)

SODA POP KIDS – "Write Home" CD

Image-conscious glam punk from the Pacific Northwest. The better moments are the more lipstick power-pop focused ones, which are sadly buried underneath a mountain of less-than-stellar JOHNNY THUNDERS worship. Suitable for fans of Gearhead or long-gone Junk Records...but not much else. (MC)
(www.fullbreachkicks.com)

SOUL SWALLOWER – "XXX" EP

SOUL SWALLOWER quite brilliantly and savagely extends the classic Boston HC style with this set of six songs. Not unlike LACK OF INTEREST, the hardcore employs classic grating vocals and a well-defined guitar attack to create a palpable electricity that actually builds on the intensity of those classic mid-'80s Boston bands. The songs are uniformly strong, and cut from the same stylistic cloth. Strongly recommended. (SS)
(Collapse, no address)

SPERMBIRDS – "Something to Prove" CD

Germany mid-'80s. Ex-GI Lee Hollis stays put after service, influenced by the likes of MINOR THREAT, ANGRY SAMOANS, and the ADOLESCENTS, and puts together a German band with a bunch of Krauts already mixing it up with DIE WALTER ELF. These are the early results, and they took Europe by storm. Quite right too—at their best (and there are several highs on this), they were the equal of any of the aforementioned bands. All their earliest vinyl, including the legendary first LP, is gathered here. You're in for a treat, despite the occasionally puerile lyric. Super nice guys too. Re-release of the year so far. (RK)
(www.bosstuneage.com)

SPLITTING HEADACHE – "Drowing" EP

SPLITTING HEADACHE is a New Jersey super group of sorts, who give us six tracks of awesome, skate-influenced hardcore in the vein of RKL or GANG GREEN. With members of TEAR IT UP, FULL SPEED AHEAD, and FORWARD TO DEATH, you really can't go wrong with this powerful piece of wax. This is another solid release from Collapse Records. (CC)
(Collapse, 657 San Leon, Irvine, CA 92606)

SS-KALIERT – "Break the Power" EP

Classic sounding German punk with gruff vocals, melodic but ripping guitars, and hard pounding drums holding it all together. SS-KALIERT's style is similar to, but heavier than, their mid-'80s country mates INFERNO, RAZZIA, TARGETS, etc. I liked those bands and therefore I like this record, but if you're looking for something new and original, forget about it. The screen-printed cover is hella cool, and from the photo on the back it looks these five dudes have a total of at least nine hawks (two tri-hawks, three mohawks)! (PC)
(FNS, www.ss-kaliert.com)

SS ULTRABRUTAL – "Global Brutal" LP

The first thing that strikes me about this LP is the *terrible* art. It's my worst nightmare of an overdone computer-generated cover and makes the gaudiest Japanese hardcore record seem like crude caveman scrawl circa 50,000 B.C. Dare I even attempt to describe it in mere words? The record's title, in the foreground, rendered in 3D psychedelic letters, floats in some sort of liquid. Behind it stands the band, waist-deep in the aforementioned liquid, arms crossed, cigarettes dangling from lips, in

leather jackets and shades. Behind them, in giant bright red and yellow letters, is a giant "SS ULTRABRUTAL." Now imagine this scene inside a gothic cathedral/dungeon with a red-eyed horned skull over the top archway. Include a majestic gleam reflected off the glittering surface of whatever the band's standing in, and you're getting the idea. The back cover, which is set on the surface of some sort of lava-planet in deep space, might be somehow worse. As for the music itself, it's decent Deutschepunk: catchy, melodic, and driving; possibly a bit overproduced and long-winded. SS ULTRABRUTAL was around in the early '80s, and though I doubt they've been an active band all these years, this record is mostly pretty solid in a meat-and-potatoes kinda way. (CS)
(Riot, Postfach 1116, D-35316 Laubach, GERMANY, ww.riot-records.com)

STEEL TOE SOLUTION – "The Eight Year War" CD
Working class oi-inspired punk played by a bunch of blokes straight off the construction site, not unlike label mates WRETCHED ONES and LIMECELL. It's got a little more balls that most of the plodding oi that flows through here, but still is way too one-dimensional for me. (TB)
(Headache, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432)

STOKOE – "The Experiment Has Been a Complete and Utter Failure" CD
The latest combo featuring Dickie Hammond of LEATHERFACE fame. All songs written by Dickie, this features a gal singer and with that trademark guitar sound we have some fine results. The vocals here are more sung than shouted which gives this a more pop feel on the gal tracks. Frankie Stubbs makes a guest appearance too in a low-key way on the last track. A welcome release for the fans of Brit punk circa the '90s. (RL)
(Rookie)

THE STOOGES – "Live! Down on the Street" 2xLP
It took me a few seconds to register that this live STOOGES set, recorded at the Exit Festival, Novi Sad, Serbia July 4th 2004, *was recorded in 2004*! But damn…aside from a few mediocre-to-lousy new songs and the fact that they play "I Wanna Be Your Dog" *twice,* this double LP isn't the train wreck the date implies. The STOOGES stick to the classics from their first two LPs and the band, tight and solid as ever, sound fucking fantastic! For a live recording, the sound is great. This is a far better record than the *Stukas Over Disneyland* LP that came out last year… But this sure as hell isn't Michigan Palace, 1974. Iggy has, to say the least, lost his edge. If you want to hear the raw, viscous intensity that made the STOOGES so legendary, put on *Metallic KO.* (VH)
(Bootleg)

SUPERHELICOPTERS – "Sweet Nice and Happy… In Hell" LP
I know people who are really into this band, I just ain't one of them. SUPERHELICOPTER played trashed out, garage rock 'n' roll that just falls flat to these ears. I don't know what it is, but this shit just lacks that edge—to me just screams pretention. A rare miss for P. Trash. (JF)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY)

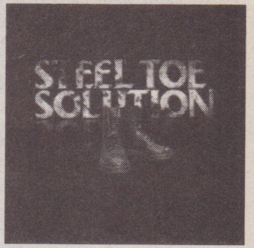
TARPIT – "Checkmate" EP
TARPIT plays '80s-style hardcore with some more modern influences. They're a bit heavier than today's typical retro thrashers but both are feet still firmly planted in punk rock. Ugly and aggressive hardcore with some interesting tempo changes, at times reminds me a bit of INFEST or CITIZENS ARREST. This one-sided EP has three originals plus an F.U.'S cover ("What You Pay For"). (CS)
(Collapse)

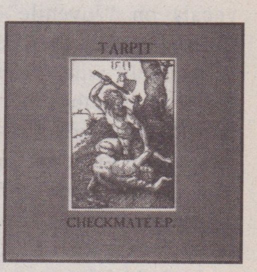
TEEN CRUD COMBO – "Judgment Night Soundtrack Part Two" LP
The story on the back of the record tells me that I'm supposed to be impressed with this now defunct Toronto punk 'n' roll band. Recorded in 1999-2000, this is good, if not great, punk rock/hardcore/rock'n'roll. It's definitely solid, but a little too rock 'n' roll for me. (KK)
(Deranged, www.derangedrecords.com)

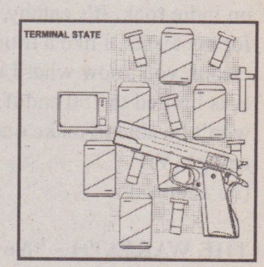
TERMINAL STATE – "Panic Attack" EP
This is a great example of some rippin' fucking hardcore punk! TERMINAL STATE has the sound down: they did their homework on what works in a good tune. (High fives for your research boys.) I saw them live in Toronto and they pulled it off en vivo. I must say, though, that the singer needs to stay on his fucking meds 'cause watching him throw a tizzy in a ten-year old, bratty, sort of way really sucked and made me think he was a complete ass. Oh, and screaming in a woman's face the way you did was not fucking cute, especially after she booked your band on the fucking show. The rest of the band seemed like really awesome guys, too bad the singer fucked it up. (MS)
(Hate The '80s, 204 Belvidere St. Nazareth, PA 18064)

THIRTEEN BLACK – "Home Town Terrorists" CD
Up-tempo driving punk from Arizona. It's fast yet catchy, maybe on the punk side of melodic hardcore. 13 tracks on a self-released album, this is pretty good...even though three quarters of the band have goatees. (AD)
(no address)

TOKYO ELECTRON – "She Keeps Me Shut" EP
The kids have gone crazy for these scuzzballs and their rock under static dirge. I'm all for it—it's out of control but never loses those tight oil-greased corners, keeping its cool while everything around burns. This is dirt on vinyl, the sound of heads getting cracked, bottles getting smashed, and cocaine binges going desperately wrong. For all those who worshipped at the alter of the MOTARDS, for all the cats that loved to crack knuckles to the REATARDS, for all those knuckle-dragging cave dwellers who like their rawk unwashed, this is a stinking four-track platter of lo-fi perfection. (SD)
(Big Black Hole, bigblackholerecords@yahoo.com)







TRACTOR SEX FATALITY – "Black Magic, White Pussy" LP

Not so blackened that this old, haggard, white pussy will need much more than 50 words to get his discriminating, omnipotent, opinion across here. BUTTHOLE SURFERS style gospel over MMF, wall of turd sludge, with PACHINKO-meets-CRUCIFUCKS-derived, yet hacked, riffage. Pixel-laden, new millennium shit typography drives home further how that this just ain't the real deal. (BS)
(Big Neck, PO Box 8144, Reston, VA 20196, bigneckrecords.com)

TRANZMITORS – "Bigger Houses, Broken Homes / Glamour Girls"

This record came with zero information. In theory it came out this year. However, it sounds so much like high quality late '70s power pop, that if somebody told it was from 1977 Scotland, I'd believe 'em. Whether it's from 1977 or 2006, it is fucking rocking power pop. And rocking power pop is not for pussies. Beware; it is extremely catchy. (KK)
(Deranged, www.derangedrecords.com)

TYRADES / LE JONATHAN REILLY – split EP

The TYRADES are a great band…one of the only things the city of Chicago has going for itself. I was totally thrown off hearing the completely ridiculous yelling and back-up vocals on "Juvenile"—the BLACK LIPS cover song they decided to kick off their side of this split with. Yeah. I'm sure it seemed *really* funny at the time… Luckily, they back it up with two scorchers. As always, they turned the gain up to eleven, and covered the amp in snot, vomit, and broken glass. Explosive, jagged, raw… Great! Valencia, Spain's LE JONATHAN REILLY dishes out three songs (one of which is instrumental) of jangle-y, guitar-driven, melodic garage punk that borders on indie rock. It's catchy, but way to "vanilla" for my taste... I like a little bit of piss in my ice cream, you know what I mean? Oh, this sucker is limited to 750 and if you run into one you won't be able to make out the art school packaging! (VH)
(no address)

THE WARPATH – "Nowhere to Run" CD

With actual goony lyrics like, "Hardcore ain't for the weak and you seem weak to me, dunno why you're here, get the fuck out of our scene, this shit ain't for you…Fuck you," you'll find me by the pool with a mai tai. Like, who would buy this CD to find that out? What do you then do? Torpedo this to the used record store? Suicide? Get a personal trainer? Become a banker? Twelve tracks of solid enough, muscular, boys' rite of passage, late AGNOSTIC FRONT/MADBALL-style, testosterone-driven mosh-core from New Zealand, with all the genre-defining, yawn-inducing points of throaty vocals, dancey metallic moshing breakdowns, gang vocals, and lyrics about fighting, punching stuff, inner pain (shockingly omitted is the "friends stabbed me in the back" song) and punching some more stuff. With some zombie soldiers on the attack on the cover, it's odd to appropriate the imagery of war during an actual fucked up war for sheer fantasy purposes, but oh…whatever. (KS)
(Action Man, www.actionmanrecords.com)

WAU Y LOS ARRRGHS!! – "Cantan en Español" CD

A real tempest in a teapot. Definite bee in my bonnet, fly in the ointment, bat in the belfry (etc.). WAU Y LOS ARRRGHS!! aren't original, sound like a lot of other tinny 60s-style-frat-rock-surf-bands of the type that would guest star as cartoon characters in ancient *Flintstones* episodes, and can barely pass their tunes off as originals because there are so many stolen riffs plastered all over the walls ("Johnny Be Good" and "Shot Down," to name a few). Still, at least they've got some fucking *spirit.* They're from Spain (Valencia, that is), scream a lot, sound like jerks, and *entertain.* WAU Y LOS ARRRGHS!! never attain the intensity of, say, a LIGHTNING BEAT MAN, but they're driven by the same kinda animal passions. Fun. (JH)
(Voodoo Rhythm, Jurastrasse 15, 3103 Bern, SWITZERLAND, www.voodoorhythm.com)

WILD BILLY CHILDISH & THE BUFF MEDWAYS – "Medway Wheelers" CD

Ah, the pedigree says it all. With members of the MILKSHAKES, PRISONERS, and PRIME MOVERS, to mention a few, sure you knew you were on a winner. 12 wonderful tracks harkening back to a bygone age when army jackets and military attire where all the vogue; fashion can be a cruel mistress. Unashamedly fronting its influences, drenched in the glorious harmony of the first three WHO LPs, with the quirkiness and feel of splendid ol' England as mastered by the KINKS, all put to the rough and tumble clatter and boom production one can expect from yet another Mr. Childish experiment. Jolly bloody good, I say. (SD)
(Damaged Goods, PO Box, 45854, London E11 1YX, ENGLAND)

YPÖ-VIIS – "Karhulan Poikii Live" CD

An almost complete collection of the output of this venerable Finnish band. The first (in Finland) to release their vinyl on their own independent label in the late '70s, what you do get here is their 15-track LP (from '79), some live stuff from '79, a demo from '78, a couple of comp tracks, an unreleased effort, and some live stuff from a reunion gig. The 27 songs include covers of the RAMONES, CLASH and "Twist & Shout" (all sung in Finnish), which gives you some idea of where they were coming from musically. It's basic, energetic late '70s punk, which, if it wasn't for the obscure lingo, could easily have been EATER, or the LURKERS. The booklet contains a bunch of photos, discography, and (I'm guessing) history and/or reminisces from the band. It's all in Finnish, so I can't clue you in much more than that. I thoroughly enjoyed it, though. Who knows, mebbe their label was Finland's Stiff records!? (RK)
(www.woimasointu.com)

V/A – "Alright, This Time Just the Girls, Vol. 2" LP

This is kind of a "greatest hits" culled from Sympathy's back catalogue of lady-fronted bands and uh, lady bands. The liner notes are kind of sickly sweet and silly in places but are generally informative, tho' they don't correspond with Camilla Rose Garcia's awesome doomed girl cover art. This would probably make a good soundtrack to a punk girl movie. The power pop band playing at the prom would be TINA & THE TOTAL BABES, then for the make-out scene maybe the DETROIT COBRAS' Mary Wells cover would filter thru on the car radio, then for the running from the cops in the rain part the A-LINES would do. Anyways, there are about 30,000 bands on this, it's a double LP, Long John likes the ladies, and on the merits of this record who could argue with him? From Wanda Jackson to the 5,6,7,8's to numerous ex-members of THEE HEADCOATEES, all bases are covered in the Sympathy world—country tinged, blues-esque, power pop… There's bound to be something on this you could dance to. (LG)
(Sympathy for the Record Industry, www.sympathyrecords.com)

V/A – "Ofensia / Mais Treta / Trista Fim De Rosilene" CD

A marathon high-energy three-way split CD of ten tracks each by three Brazilian bands that deliver what's quickly becoming the national sound of Brazil *a la* MUKEA DI RATO, I SHOT CYRUS, DISCARGA; that is, throttling, high-speed ultra-thrash. MAIS TRETA delivers undistorted, clean, high-energy, drum-driven straight ahead hardcore with vocals occasionally reaching barking savagery and the music occasionally quirky *a la* RAPED TEENAGERS, but largely like a 625-style blast beat drummer transported back to fill in for a mid-'80s hardcore band. TRISTA FIM DE ROSILENE continues the drum assault, searing at an even faster light speed pace and

urgent pitch with piercing, spot on female vocals. They blaze so fast you'll swear it was artificially sped up. OFENSIA continues the throttling high speed but with a more chaotic and somewhat complex (mid-tempo breaks!?!) attack and slathering vocals. Total effect? You're either left totally jazzed and energized or you're winded roadkill! Storming!!! (KS)
(Alea, PO Box 317 CEP, 70359-970, BRAZIL, www.alearecs.cjb.net)

V/A – "An International Underground Tribute to the Man in Black" CD
Sacrilege. Johnny Cash was a fucking legend and most folks would be hard pressed to do the man justice, let alone what appears to be 80% skinhead bands. This is aural butchery—I mean some of the bands really aren't that bad, but if you are in any way familiar with Johnny Cash it's pretty horrible. I can get into the stuff that reinterprets the songs in their own way like RENO DIVORCE's SOCIAL DISTORTION-esque ripoff of "Guess Things Happen That Way" or SOCIAL COMBAT's street punk take of "Country Boy" but for the most part this is a barbaric homage to a legend. Boo, hiss. (TB)
(Rebellion, www.rebellionrecords.nl)

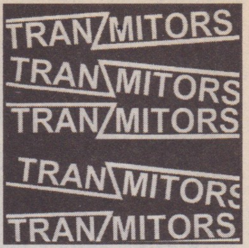
V/A – "Hardcore Cinema" EP
Having really low expectations for something means that your opinion of it can only improve over time right? Such is not the case for this movie themed compilation entitled *Hardcore Cinema.* Someone thought it was a good idea to have metal-hardcore bands writing songs about American action-film classics such as *Diehard*, *The Warriors*, *Boondock Saints*, and…*Groundhog Day*? EVIL PRIEST was surprisingly really good, despite claiming to be the Bruce Willis of hardcore, and then actually screaming "yippee kiyay motherfuckers." And that was the least baffling part of the record. (CC)
(Action Man, www.actionmanrecords.com)

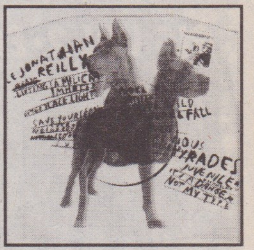
V/A – "Mas Rock and Roll: 26 Rare '60s Teen-Punk Artyfacts" CD
Hearing *Mas Rock and Roll* isn't exactly a spiritual epiphany (the clouds haven't parted, smiling cherubs haven't braided daises into my hair, and I've still got the mean Sunday Nite Blues), but it's still a rare treat and an eye-opening introduction to 60s garage punk en español from various points in the Spanish-speaking world (Michael Lucas knows all the finer points about these bands, I'm a know-nothing). Features scratchy-and-popping selections from SLEEPERS, SAICOS, RAUL HITLER, SURFERS DE LOS CAMPEONS, SINNERS, SOMNAMBULOS, SHAINS, SPEAKESR, FAMOUS FINKS, MONSTRUOS, MONJOES, SHAKERS, VIDRIOS QUEBRADOS, ELECTRONICOS, and lots more. Runs the gamut from swaggering 60s punk with braying Farfisa organ to high-energy surf 'n' roll—and has the stink of *quality* all over it. Recommended by four out of five dentists. (JH)
(Electro Harmonix)

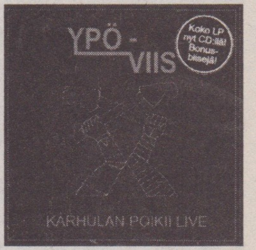
V/A – "They Came for Your Milk Money" CD
In the age of the disposable compilation, *They Came for Your Milk Money* truly delivers quality (and more importantly exclusive) tracks by some of today's great hardcore bands. The selling point of this compilation is the three songs by the ALLIGATORS, who feature Roger Miret from AGNOSTIC FRONT and the dudes from INSTED. Like I mentioned in an earlier column, if the idea of Roger Miret screaming over *Victim in Pain*-era hardcore doesn't interest you, then you probably are reading the wrong magazine. The ALLIGATORS aside, there are also great exclusive tracks by the FIRST STEP (their first released songs since 2001's *Open Hearts and Clear Minds*), a cover of DAG NASTY's "One to Two" by INSTED, two great tracks (one being a BREAKDOWN cover) by KILL YOUR IDOLS, as well as contributions from NOTHING IN RETURN, ONE AGAINST ONE, BULLET TREATMENT, the GEEKS, SHEA'S REBELLION, and TRUST. The real big surprise on here for me was SAY GOODBYE, who brings three cuts of raging, early '80s, traditional Boston hardcore. I need to go back and listen to their records again. (CC)
(www.newmusicrevolution.com)

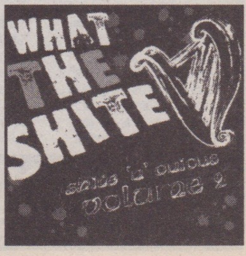
V/A – "Things You Own End Up Owning You" CD
An international comp on a Japanese label with four bands doing a few songs each. Stylistically, this runs the gamut from emo-tinged, MINUTEMEN-influenced hardcore (REACTIONARY 3, Florida), to emo-tinged UK Riot Grrrl-influenced hardcore (ICE CREAM EATING MOTHERFUCKERS, Holland), to trad-sounding anthemic rock punk (the VENDETTA, Italy), to emo-tinged LEATHERFACE/JAWBREAKER-worshipping pop punk (DANCE WITH ME, Japan). On the whole, a good listen and definitely a brilliant alternative to those comps with one song each by forty different bands. Having a few songs by each band gives you a chance to actually get into them, and splitting them up in the song order means that even if you're not super into one of the bands (the VENDETTA tracks sound a little out of place amongst the passionate and sincere-sounding work of the other bands), you'll probably listen to them anyway. DANCE WITH ME is my favorite new discovery from this record. Good stuff. (Note—although it's a CD, it's packaged like a 7", so don't pass it up in those distro boxes…) (AM)
(Too Circle, c/o Shingo Maeda, 221-3 Hi-home Kodaira 510, Nakamachi Kodaira-city #187-0042, Tokyo, JAPAN, toocir@xd5.so-net.ne.jp)

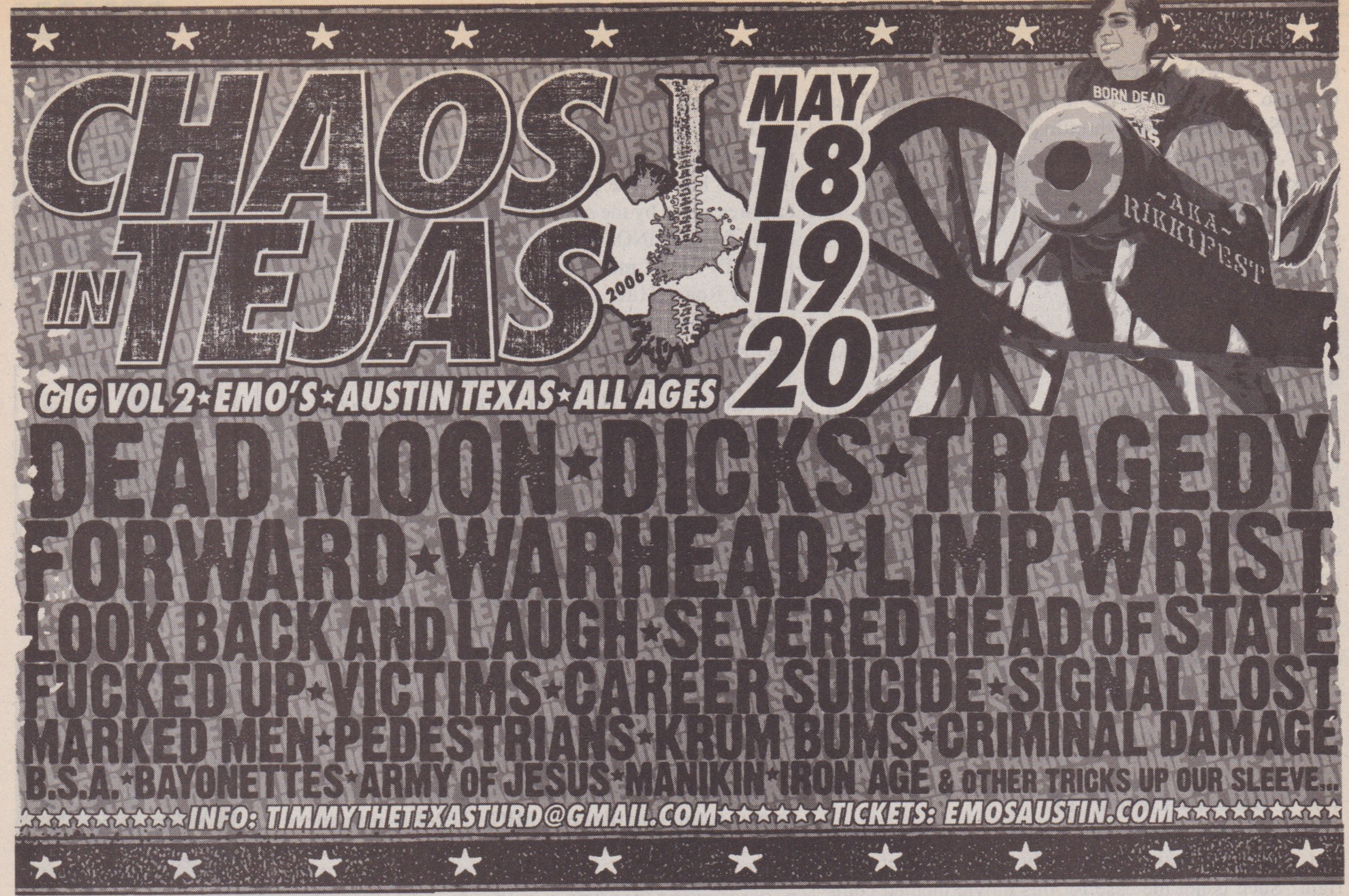
V/A – "What the Shite: Shite 'n' Onions, Vol. 2"
Second compilation of Celtic folk-punk, from America's prime purveyors of the genre. 17 bands, 19 tracks, from Canada, Australia, Germany, UK and the USA. Apparently, wherever you're from, you get a fiddle in the mix, an Irish accent (real, or, er, imagined), and you're the POGUES. Or is it FLOGGING MOLLY these days? I actually really dig the GO SET on this comp—and if you're fans of the genre, it's for sure a great way to check out the new talent…even if it all does sound rather, er, familiar. (RK)
(www.shitenonions.com)







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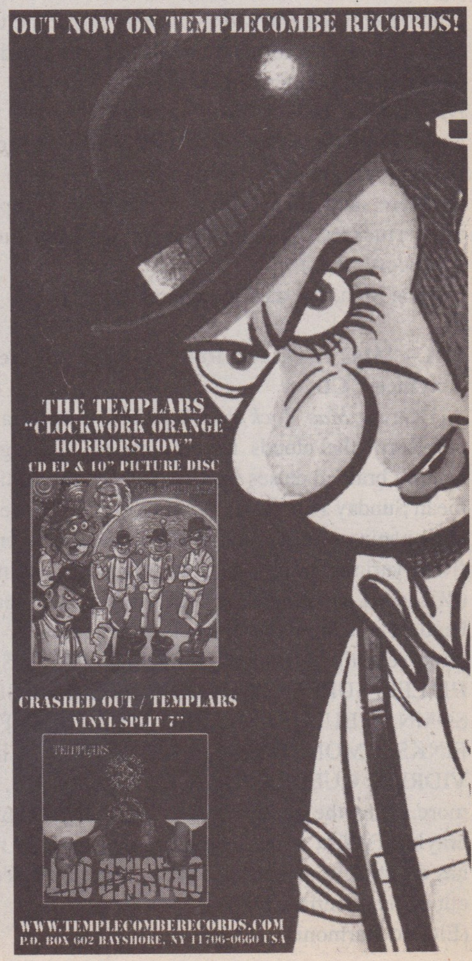
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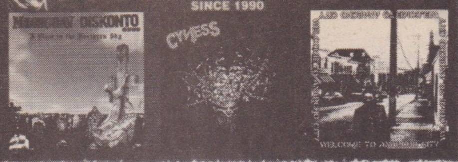

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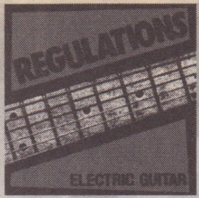

REGULATIONS
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VITAMIN X
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LPS, 12"S, CDS:

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WOLFBRIGADE Progression... LP/CD
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VITAMIN X Down the Drain LP/CD
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FROM ASHES RISE/VICTIMS LP/CD
WOLFBRIGADE D-Beat Odyssey 12"EP

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LP/CD

MARTYRDOD
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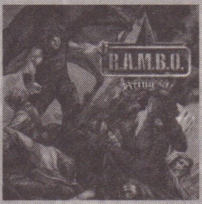

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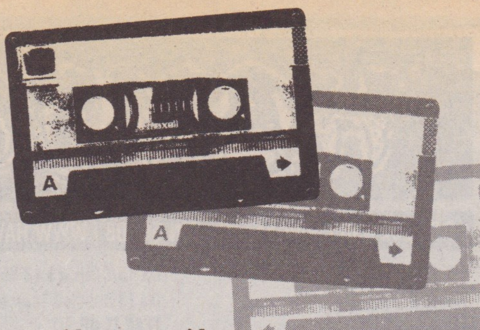


Send demos and CD-Rs to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Peter Avery, Ariel Awesome, and Erin Yanke.

A HAPPY DEATH has four songs of somewhat dark, indie/punk music. The songs are uptempo with some parts having a lo-fi, clean guitar sound and monotone singing that is similar to the CINNAMON IMPERIALS. Other parts of the songs are more punkish, with overdriven guitars, heavier drumming and screaming vocals. The music can be catchy at times but altogether the sound is a bit flat. They also have a slight tempo problem, where the guitars sound like they are constantly trying to push the songs to be faster. (4 song CD, with lyrics. seveninchesofwax@yahoo.com) (Pete)

ANTIDOTE plays some garage hardcore that is fast and furious. They stay steady with the pacing and vocal style, which is gruff and doesn't change cadence that much. The vocals sound pure and pissed off but sometimes they compete with the guitar sound, as do the cymbals. Mostly, though, there is balance in this basement. (6 song CD, lyric *booklet*! 53967 Birchwood Ct., Shelby Twp, MI 48316.) (Erin)

ATOMGEVITTER rips it up live on this demo! It's a mix of some live shows, and does show off their full-on thrash sensibilities and chaotic edges. They've got some metal moments in there too, and some good banter. It's funny to hear the goading of the crowd to move forward and, I assume, dance. The balance of vocals and instrumentation is perfect, which is hard to accomplish. Good job! ($2 ppd. 3/1 Ionithsdale Drive, Glasgow, G41 2PM, Scotland.) (Erin)

BAD DIRTY HATE plays fierce and furiously fast hardcore. It's that distinctive East Coast hardcore sound, but supercharged; like GANG GREEN on acid, steroids, and speed. Fucking amazing. I am going to Osaka and watching this band tear shit up as soon as humanly possible. *Fuck yes!* (4 song CD, lyrics included. Bad_dirty_hate@ybb.ne.jp) (Ariel)

By the Bands [for the Fans] is a twelve band Nashville comp that is pretty damn diverse in sound. On this comp you'll find garage rock, punk, pop punk, bluegrass, and some tripped-out weed-smokin' psych rock…none of it remarkable, none of it awful. (24 song CD, no lyrics included. www.myspace.com/rocknrollhooligans) (Ariel)

THE CHALLENGED think they are the last pop-punk band left in Brooklyn, and maybe that's true. Their music resides in the well worn and loved territory of RAMONES-core, but instead of the usual SCREECHING WEASEL knockoff, they pull off their own brand of the sound nicely. Vocals sound a lot like a younger Billie Joe Armstrong, you know when he was still a snotty teenager, not just playing one on TV. (8 song CD, lyrics included. www.thechallenged.com) (Ariel)

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT plays slapdashly charming punk/hardcore with pissed, and at times BLATZ-esque female and group vocals. The average song length is a little under a minute, which kept my attention deficit in check. All songs are political in an anti-corporate, anti-authority, anti-waitresses-on-mushrooms way. It works. (12 song CD, lyrics included. bentzso@hotmail.com) (Ariel)

THE MEXIKAN STAND-OFF plays "garage" rock 'n' roll with a super-produced sound, like THE HIVES or some shit like that. Generic, but totally pleasing to the ears. I must point out, however, that faceless naked women (drawings) are totally alienating and creepy, as are song titles like "she had it coming." Yuck. (3 song CD, no lyrics. www.mexikan.dk) (Ariel)

DAN McKEE is a brave man. His demo is just his bass and vocals. Recorded, as he says "exactly the way he wrote them in his bedroom." I doubt that, what with the back up singers and layered vocals, but pretty damn close. And it's really good—fuller than one would expect. It's poetic, the way the best acoustic stuff is. ($1 ppd. 4 song CD, no lyrics included. 8 Woodville Ct., Woodville Road, Cardiff, CF24 4DR, UK.) (Erin)

MOSQUITOS CAN KILL plays moody, modern, dark hardcore, with traces of metallic sensibilities coming into play. There is a variety of tempos, but, since it is hardcore after all, they return to the fast-paced frenzy no matter how far they stray. The vocals are guttural and well enunciated. (7 song CD, lyrics included. 7746 Whitehall Cir. E, West Chester, OH 45069.) (Erin)

THE NEW JUSTICE TEAM plays a great mix of assertive and forceful punk with melody. The songs differ from each other on this scale, some way more aggro than others, but it's all so good! Awesome lady vocals that are sometimes sung, sometimes spat out a mile a minute, and sometimes just pure rage. This rules. ($3 ppd. 12 song CD, lyrics included. 26 Albion Street, Roselands NSW 2196, Australia.) (Erin)

THE NUMBSKULLS play straightforward, three chord, mid- to up-tempo punk rock. The music has sort of a poppy street punk feel with solid drumming, power chords, simple but catchy leads, and gruff vocals. On the whole it sounds partly like early RANCID and partly like NAKED RAYGUN. While the songs are not amazing, they are tight and the recording sounds good. (5 song CD, no lyrics. www.thenumbskulls.com) (Pete)

MZZRCDXVL incorporates elements of trashy lo-fi into wanking guitar metal, and manages to add some hardcore to this strangest of mixtures. The vocals are shouted, and theatrical. And, now that I think of it, theatrical is a great adjective for this whole package. (7 song CD, no lyrics included. 335 Augusta Ave, Apt. E, Dekalb, IL 60115.) (Erin)

PUPPY VS. DYSLEXIA plays two distinctly different styles of music on their demo CD. Half the songs are a sort of messed up, metal influenced, sloppy punk rock with screeching vocals, and sound like a mix of LIGHTNING BOLT, BLATZ and SCHLONG. The other songs are just a mix of electronics and drum machines, which is like a spacey version of MEN'S RECOVERY PROJECT but not nearly as funny. Their punk songs are fun to listen to in a weird way if you don't mind skipping through the junk. (12 song CD, no lyrics. www.fmsmprc.com) (Pete)

RITUAL OF CONSPIRACY rides the fine line between metallic hardcore and metal. Slow and dark, fancy guitar work, and guttural vocals abound. The vocals are prominent and it's hard to hear the music sometimes, but that's a live recording, folks. One studio song is included too, but ironically it's hard to hear the vocals in that one. ($1 and a blank CD-R or tape, or trade. 3 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 1331. Plainview, TX 79073.)(Erin)

SCIENCE KILLED HIM is an acoustic guitar with soft, dark and moody vocals over it.

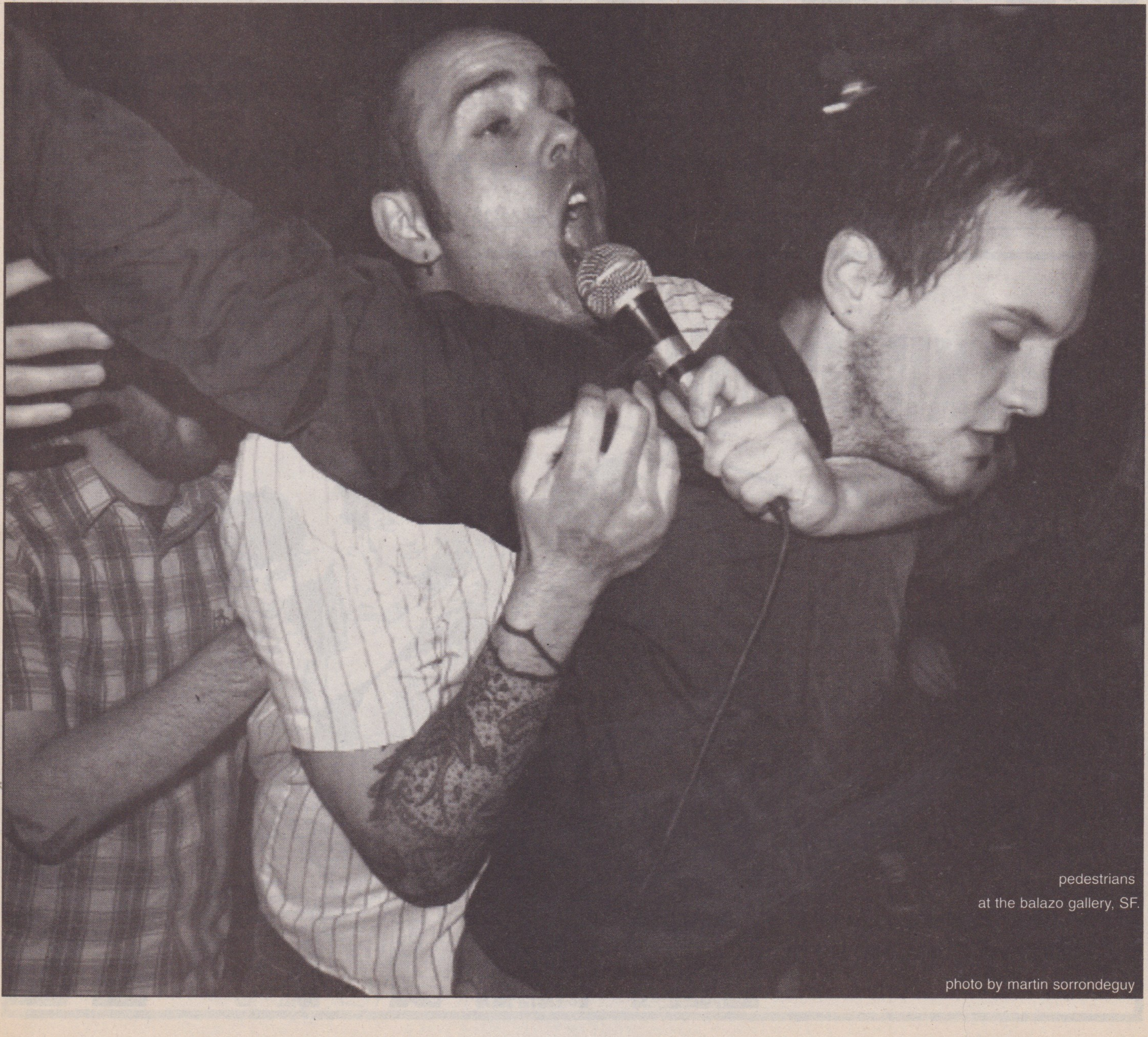
Sounds like maybe a violin in there too, to add atmosphere to the gloom. ($2 ppd. 17 song CD, no lyrics included. 4502 Larch Ln., Bellaire, TX 77401.) (Erin)

SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE plays pissed off, metal-influenced, straight edge hardcore. The guitar's treble heavy sound doesn't fit the heavy, chugging riffs that the guitarist is playing and the thin sound isn't helped by the almost total lack of bass guitar in the mix. The drummer sounds like he is absolutely enamored with his double bass pedal and manages to keep the songs together with solid playing. Lastly, the vocalist really belts it out with a deep yelling style that makes up for the lack of toughness in the guitars. There is nothing really inventive about the music but a different recording might make this sound pretty good. ($3 ppd. 6 song CD, no lyrics. fightingchancemd@hotmail.com) (Pete)

WHITE ROSE is coming from the punk rock, but they execute it a variety of styles, with a bit of hardcore and a big ol' handful of hard rock. They play mostly mid- but sometimes slow-tempo, but on the slower songs the instrumentation is deep enough to use the time wisely. The vocals are abrasively sung, which I really like. ($4 ppd. 4 song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 880908, Pukalani, HI 96788.) (Erin)

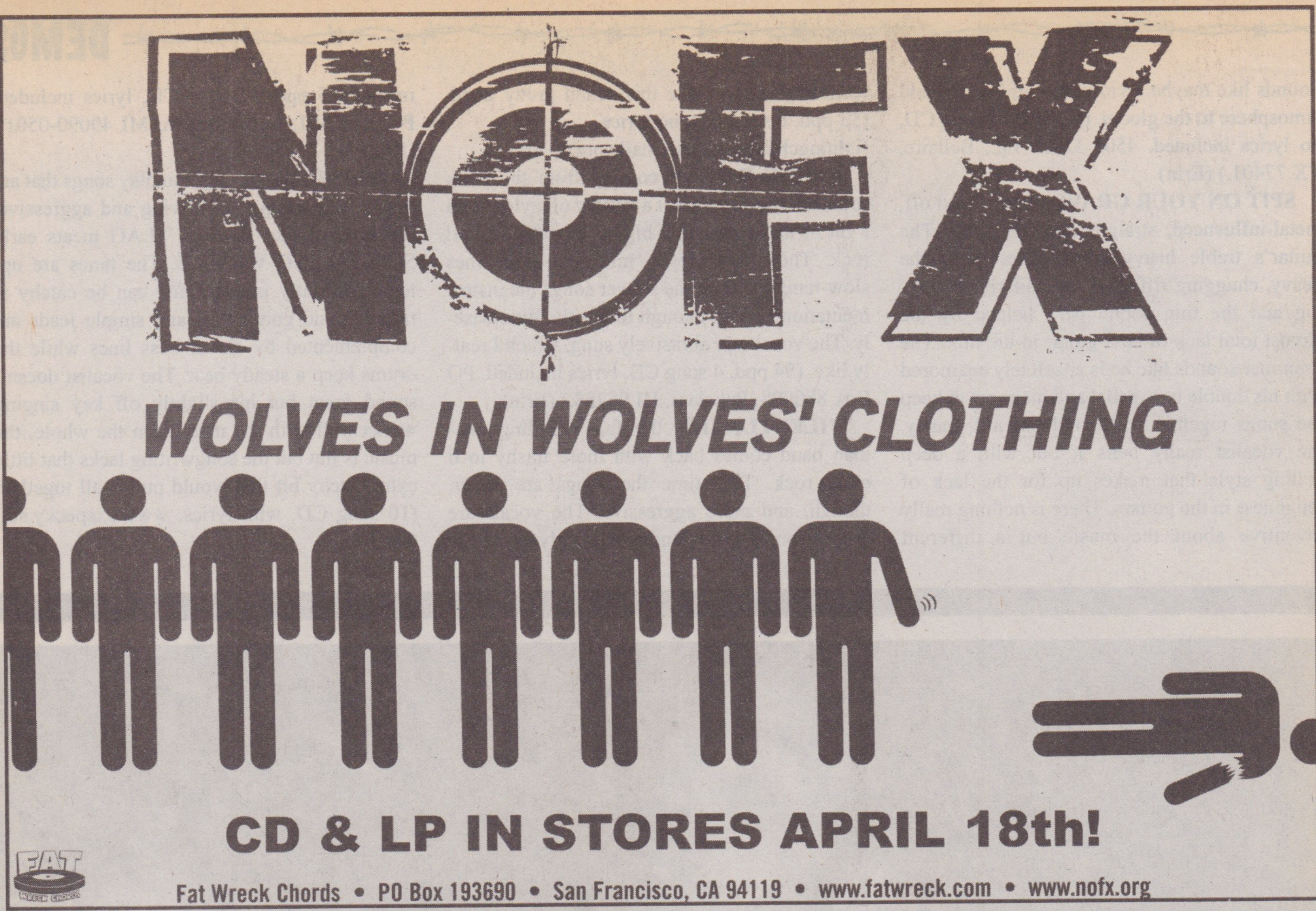
VILENTLY ILL, the full sounding one-man band comes back with more trashy lo-fi punk rock. This time the songs are faster, though, and more aggressive. The vocals are shouted and spiteful, and ride slightly above the music. ($5 ppd. 15 song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 501, South Haven, MI 49090-0501.) (Erin)

ZXSPECHY manages to play songs that are poppy and wimpy yet driving and aggressive. It's kind of like BLACK FLAG meets early SCREECHING WEASLE. The tunes are up-tempo, slightly melodic and can be catchy at times. Basic guitar riffs and simple leads are complemented by clever bass lines while the drums keep a steady beat. The vocalist doesn't sound great but his slightly off key singing works well with the music. On the whole, the music is fun but the songwriting lacks that little extra catchy bit that would pull it all together. (10 song CD, with lyrics. www.zxspecky.net) (Pete)



pedestrians
at the balazo gallery, SF.

photo by martin sorrondeguy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ZINES

Reviews by: Paul Curran (PC), Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Cassie Harwood (CH), Harald Hartmann (HH), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

AB #5 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 24 pgs

This zine, which you can evidently order from the same place as *Dwelling Portably* zine, is in the same family of writing as *DP*, though its focus is not the mobile lifestyle. From the introduction: "*Ab* discusses how and where to live better and longer; including, how to steer clearer of increasingly-berserk political/economic/social/religious systems." The writing is not edited, and is contributed by a number of people. This means that some pieces read better than others, but I like the collaborative feeling of this zine. The layout is very text heavy, but not in a way that is distracting or difficult (except for the page focusing on bicycles/transportation, on which the font was so small that it was virtually unreadable). Overall, I found myself impressed by the goal of the project, and by most of the outcome. (GN)
Dwelling Portably / PO Box 190-ab / Phlm, OR 97370

ALPHABET #1 / $?
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 32 pgs

The concept of this zine is pretty simple: 26 issues, each featuring art for one letter of the alphabet (this being the first issue, it focuses on the letter A), with drawings rendered by a number of different artists. The subject matter was pretty diverse on this one, ranging from the straightforward (artichoke, airplane) to the more theoretical (anachronism, allegory of the cave), to the silly (aggrocrag, Adam Ant), but the deceptively simple concept gave way to a larger, enjoyable whole. The whole zine comes handsomely housed in a textured, hand-printed and sewn cover, which ads a nice touch to this charming zine. (GN)
Logan / 1819 Woolsey St. / Berkeley, CA 94703
logan.rockefeller.harris@gmail.com

BEAT MOTEL #4 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 79 pgs

Sizable UK punk music zine with a well-organized layout and a prominent juvenile sense of humor (not always a bad thing!). Sometimes works, sometimes doesn't. Covers a variety of types of music, mainly larger punk/melodic HC bands, but with quite a number of DIY zine reviews. This issue has Pelican, Charlie Brown, and Real McKenzies interviews. Also included are horoscopes, some columns, stories, etc. Not bad. (NM)
71 Rectory Rd / Ipswich / Suffolk / IP2 8EQ / UK
www.beatmotel.co.uk

BODY COUNT #1 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs

Body Count is a zine that comes from Calgary, executed in a classical sort of zine fashion, with heavy emphasis on old style cut and paste, and very little help from a computer, which is a good thing in my book. The features include an account of Damien Inbred's trip to the CLIT fest, and an interview with *MRR*'s own George Tabb. It's a quick read and not terribly inspired stuff. Some serious adventure or really exciting layouts might improve things in issue #2, but I'm not holding my breath. (AS)
3608 28th St. SE / Calgary, AB T2B 2H9 / Canada

COMMUNICATING VESSELS #17 / free, donations welcome
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 54 pgs

A very wordy pamphlet/fanzine with literate and informative, if somewhat haughty, writings about the New Orleans hurricane Katrina disaster and capitalism's catastrophic effects on city planning, as well as lengthy reviews of Laurence Stern's *The Life and Opinions of Tristam Shandy* (yes, the 18th century English novel) and an interesting reprint of an article written by '50s novelist/communist Jean Malaquais critiquing Norman Mailer's essay "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," which comes across as somewhat obscure, though thought-provoking. I am sure that this zine has a very loyal set of followers—it is very well done, and doesn't read like pretty much any other zine I've had to review. Nonetheless, I found much of the subject material and writing too dry to really get too excited about. If you are interested, you should send a couple of bucks for postage and cost 'cause it seems that the editor is basically funding the project as a labor of love. (GN)
3527 NE 15th Ave #127 / Portland, OR 97212

DIG IT! #36 / $6
8 x 11 – printed – 52 pgs – French

This issue can only be called the "Detroit Rock City Issue" as it is almost solely devoted to rock and roll from that city. Included are interviews with Mick Collins of the Dirtbombs, Margaret and Dan of the Doll Rods, Troy Gregory of the Witches and other assorted rock and roll endeavors, and Jim Diamond. There is also an inter-

view with the band Holy Curse from Australia. And of course this fanzine is loaded with cool information on rock and roll and punk rock in the articles "Shake Some Action" and "Through the Grapevine." Definitely, one of the best all around fanzines to be found anywhere. One can also listen to their weekly radio show on the web, go to their website for the link and shake your bones. (HH)
32 rue Pharaon / 31000 Toulouse / France
www.chez.com/digitfanzine

DRAWINGS #1 / $?
7 x 8.5 – copied – 76 pgs
Presented for your enjoyment is a collection of drawings (as the title would suggest) from 26 artists. Each artist presents a few pages of drawings that range from odd pen and ink drawings of knights and deer, to strange comic strips and photomontages. There's no real theme or overall subject to the drawings, each section stands on its own. If you enjoy flipping through your friends' sketchbooks, this is probably a nice treat. (CR)
F&R / PO Box 23 / Bloomington, IN 47402

EARQUAKE #88 / $2
6 x 8 – printed – 24 pgs – French
This issue presents a great cover with a punk resolution for 2006 attacking the status quo of punk itself. Included on the pages inside are interviews with the bands Gravity Slaves, and Adrenalin OD. The rest of this fanzine consists of new record, CD, and fanzine releases. There are also plenty of contact addresses. This fanzine is always a good read. (HH)
Frederic Leca / 55 Rue St. Jean / 88300 Neufchateau / France
www.earquake@gmail.com

EQUALIZING DISTORT Vol. 6 #2 / $?
Two interviews this time, one with Seattle retro-trash-metallers Deconditioned, and one with Toronto's Protest the Hero (who is appearing soon on the Vagrant Records®/Major League Baseball™ stage at the Vans© Warped Tour—I'm serious!)… Then you get a few pages of well done, more-in-depth-than-*MRR* reviews of recent hardcore and punk releases, local show listings, and a "Rumourmill" column, which is cool but would benefit from having more real news, or even juicy rumors, rather than just a bunch of shortened press releases. We still don't know how much they charge for this thing…or maybe it's free? (PC)
91 St. George St. / Toronto, ON M5S 2E8 / Canada
equalizingXdistort@cuit.fm

ESKUPE AL ALKADE #16 / .80€, $2?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 20 pgs
Even with my limited Spanish comprehension I totally enjoyed reading this Discharge-obsessed punk fanzine. There's lots and lots of writing by the prolific Teodro on topics like Dischage, d-beat, punk fashion, and funny little article called "Atrocious Madness vs. Varukers." The highlight is the five-page comic about an old punk trying to figure out how to give his balding head a punk-looking hair cut, finally settling on shaving it all off *a la* the singer of obscuro Finninsh d-beat band, the Cadgers. Yes, the guy who does this zine is obviously an over-enthusiastic nerd with lots of time on his hands. He is also the one-man band Infierno de Cobardes, whose EP was reviewed in last month's *MRR*. If you know even a little Spanish (or maybe it help to only know a little), you should find this entertaining. (PC)
THN / Apartado 23.197 / 08080 Barcelona / Spain

FAULT LINES Vol. 2, #3 / free
9 x 17 – printed – 12 pgs
The newspaper of the Bay Area Independent Media Center, which is an excellent resource on the web as well (see below). This is my first time reading *Fault Lines*, and I was very impressed. Lots of information here both Northern California related and national/international. This issue has stuff on New Orleans, Asian labor in the Katrina recovery (fascinating!), US policy towards South America, and nuclear waste in relation to US nuclear arms. Excellent! (NM)
2490 16th St., Ste. 216 / San Francisco, CA 94103
www.indybay.org

IMAGINE #8 / $3.50
5.5 x 8 – copied – 60 pgs
I always get a little nervous when I get the anarcho zines because I am not an anarchist, and they are always full of bitchy letters from other anarcho zines critiquing minute parts of anarcho philosophy that I don't know enough about to understand. Anyway, this was a bit of a dry read for me, but interesting and generally engaging. Lots of writing on religion from Mormon responses to homosexuality to a piece on Jihad and how it relates, or rather doesn't relate, to anarchism… There's an article of anarcho parenting which I didn't manage to get through because of the overuse of the word "tribe." (LG)
Imagine / PO Box 8145 / Reno, NV 89507-8145

KISSOFF ZINE #11 / $3 or trade
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 28 pgs
I've had it with sad sacks putting out emo zines about romance and the inevitable heartache that follows, so I was pretty wary of this issue of *Kissoff* entitled "Survival." Happily, only one or two of the short pieces in here focus on romantic crap, and the rest of the little vignettes are actually pretty good, albeit flowery. And, while I wouldn't personally shell out $3 for it, I would definitely trade something. This is probably good for people who are into short creative nonfiction, or something. (TW)
301-151 Metcalfe St. / Ottowa, ON KZP IN8 / Canada

LIFE'S A RAPE #1 / $2 N. America, $4 world
8.5 x 11 – copied – 20 pgs
It's simple, it's funny, it's got some personality, and it's dedicated to San Diego hardcore. Interviewed are Life Crisis, Hatred Surge, and a local metal band. The metal one is pretty hilarious, but I think doofus metal dudes are funny, so be warned if you don't. The other two came out good. There are rants, reviews, nice photos, a couple ads, and a sweet top ten of 2005 record list, with a haiku describing each one. He sells 'em for a buck in person, and I would get one for sure at that price. He's looking to trade in quantity, too. I do think the name "normalizes" rape, which sucks. I'd like to see more context (as there is in the MDC song it was taken from) explaining why the editor picked this metaphor to name his projects. (JM)
M. Colin Tappe / PO Box 278 / Carlsbad, CA 92018 / colinrrmf@yahoo.com

OUR DAY WILL COME / YOUR DAY WILL COME #1 / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs each

Putting out two zines as companions for the first issue is pretty ambitious, so I wasn't too surprised to see that the quality of the zines was a little unevenly distributed. *One Day Will Come* is a pretty run of the mill (which is to say, fine but not mind-blowing) punk zine with record reviews and a little rant about that book *Evasion*, as well as an interview with Steve Driscoll from Scapegrace/Luddite/ Framework Records. And it's fine to read, especially if you're into the band Scapegrace. The real winner here, though, is *Your Day Will Come*, which is a *horror zine*. That's right. This other zine is really strong, with an in depth look at *Cannibal Holocaust* and why animal cruelty is sometimes used in horror movies to augment the fake human torture. There's also a review of some other movies, as well as a few horror comic books, and a rant about how predictable nudity and drug use have gotten in horror movies. This is the zine where the author's passion really shines, and I think the next issue will probably be even better. So, while the music zine is just okay, I would say that the horror one rules, or at least has the potential to really rule in the future. (TW)
John Fahy / 2163 Hoople St. / Ft. Myers, FL 33901
xposi_bridgetx@hotmail.com / fahy_john@hotmail.com

OX FANZINE #63 / $7
8 x 11 – printed – 140 pgs – German

Whoa, dude! As usual this fanzine has more god damn punk in it's pages than any normal person could digest in any given month. Included in this issue are plenty of interviews highlighting such bands as The Briefs, Propagandhi, Gluecifer, Gogol Bordello, No Use For A Name, Rote Gourmet Fraction, which is not really a band, but people who are into preparing good meals, Ministry and Murder Junkies. There is also an in depth article about American film director Liz Nord's film *Jericho's Echo* exploring punk rock in Israel. Finally, as usual this fanzine comes loaded with hundreds of new record and CD reviews, and plenty of exciting ads to make any punk rocker want to spend their money supporting the music business. And of course to make the whole package complete there is the free 31-song CD sampler that includes some rocking tracks. (HH)
PO Box 10 22 25 / 42766 Haan / Germany
www.ox-fanzine.de

PEGLEGS #50 / 89¢
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 24 pgs

Seriously, this made me think of "Deep Thoughts by Jack Handey." These mini-zines have some cheesy reflections on life (such as "some really do think that those velvet paintings are great pieces of art" or "some people really can't leave the house without makeup"), putting thoughts on paper that should perhaps stay in one's mind. This particular issue features results of a Google search on the word "pegleg" while other issues are about the editor's tattoo, "what is beauty?" and sexual slang terms. They lost me when they listed the price as "Canada – 51 cents and a smile." Several back issues are available, as this is published every 2 to 3 weeks. (MD)
Unit 44 / 15355 26th Ave. / Surrey, BC V4P 1C4 / Canada

ROCK AND BLOWS #2 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 36 pgs

This is the second issue from David who painfully, but not without some humor, recounts the self-imposed struggles of a junky. This issue contains three stories centered around being dope sick, scoring dope, and taking advantage of friends, the fourth story, recalling a failed romance is actually better than some of the dope stories. David does a great job of retelling embarrassing stories in a truthful light that avoids the usual and unfortunate glamorization of being a junky. I'm glad to read that future issues will branch out from being centered on dope, that may be his calling card, but he can write, and keeping the focus of this zine broad will only make it better. (CR)
1002 W. Montrose Ave. / Box 194 / Chicago, IL 60613
rocks_and_blows@yahoo.com

ROCTOBER #42 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 96 pgs

There are very few things in the (zine) world you can depend on, but *Roctober* is one of them. Their appeal is hard to put your finger on. They manage to cover a variety of different musical styles, then throw in reviews and comics, keeping the whole affair kind of fun and silly, but still good for a few solid hours of reading time. Issue #42 features articles about the Natural Four, Queens of the Stone Age, Toquinho, as well as a piece about crappy records put out by non-musician celebrities. Excellent stuff. (AS)
1507 E. 53rd St. #617 / Chicago, IL 60615
www.roctober.com

THE SECRETS OF LIFE AND DEATH #32 / $1?
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 32 pgs

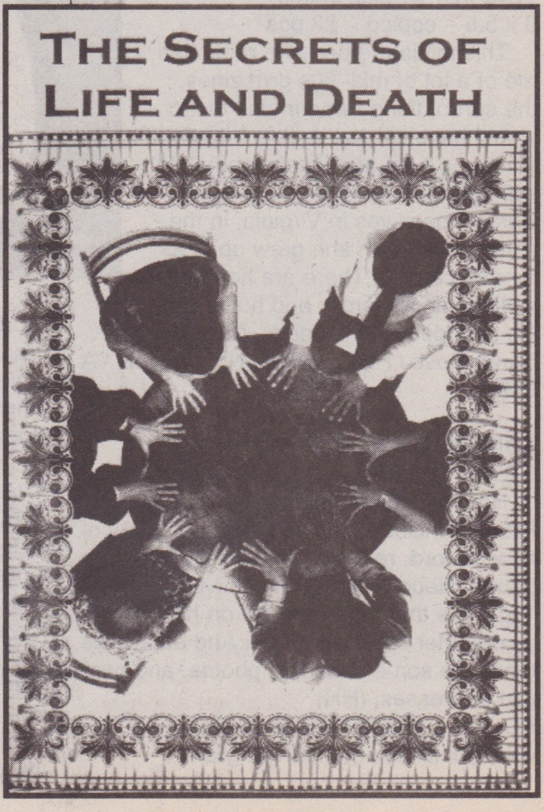
Lots of style, not as much substance. This looks really cool and has some neat collage and art. Letters from a friend in prison, how to prevent bad luck (do *not* read if you are superstitious!), some old and wacky book covers, and more…art. (MD)
1122 E. Pike St. #1393 / Seattle, WA 98122

THE SHARP END #2 / $?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 40 pages

This is an Australian hardcore zine full of pictures of full-sleeve tattooed up emotional rage lookin' bro-hims. Most of the bands written about seem to be the kind of hardcore that *Kerrang!* magazine covers, bands that would love to be on Victory, but maybe Victory in the '90s. In short, a bunch of words about bands I have no interest in hearing or hearing about. But maybe you do? NAKED BURN, PARKWAY DRIVE LIGHT THIS CITY, ONE MARK ONE MISSION, ON BROKEN WINGS, and a reformed TURMOIL. I read the whole thing anyway and have to say that though the opinion columns were very heartfelt if misguided, the interviews were borrrrrring and corporate; they didn't read like conversations at all, they all read like they could have been done via email. (LG)
PO Box 1581 / Cooparoo DC / Brisbane CBD / Australia
thesharpendfanzine@yahoo.com

SLINGSHOT #89 / $1
9 x 17 – printed –16 pgs

Long running anarcho mag here (perhaps the longest running in modern history, now that I think about it) from Berkeley. This issue covers pot legalization in



California (or lack thereof), trauma in mass protests, coping with grief, Zapatistas, Earth First, and the hypocrisy of punk porn. Always a good variety of articles and updates. (NM)
3124 Shattuck Ave. / Berkeley, CA 94705
www.slingshot.tao.ca

SORRY TREES #3 / $1 or trade
8.5 x 11 – copied – 22 pgs

I agree with another reviewer who said that name has gotta go. Put your shit on the Internet if you're sorry. This issue starts off with a pretty great Kill Your Idols interview. The questions are decent and the band gives long detailed answers. If you are stoked on KYI and haven't read a lot of talks with them, you ought to send the dollar. The talk with The Spark is all right, but the one with the punk burrito shop owner is disappointing. When the interview didn't record properly, instead of doing it over the editor used simple paraphrases for the responses. There are some rants which, um, aren't real strong, like bemoaning "the turnout was weak" for the Exploited, and one on diet and body image that is on the right track but pretty entry-level. The reviews are not too detailed, and the photos reproduced kind of dark. There are no ads. It's cheap, at least. (JM)
13329 Winterstown Rd. / Felton, PA 17322 / orkenbjorken@aol.com

TAZEWELL'S FAVORITE ECCENTRIC #2 / $1 plus stamp
3 x 5.5 – copied – 22 pgs

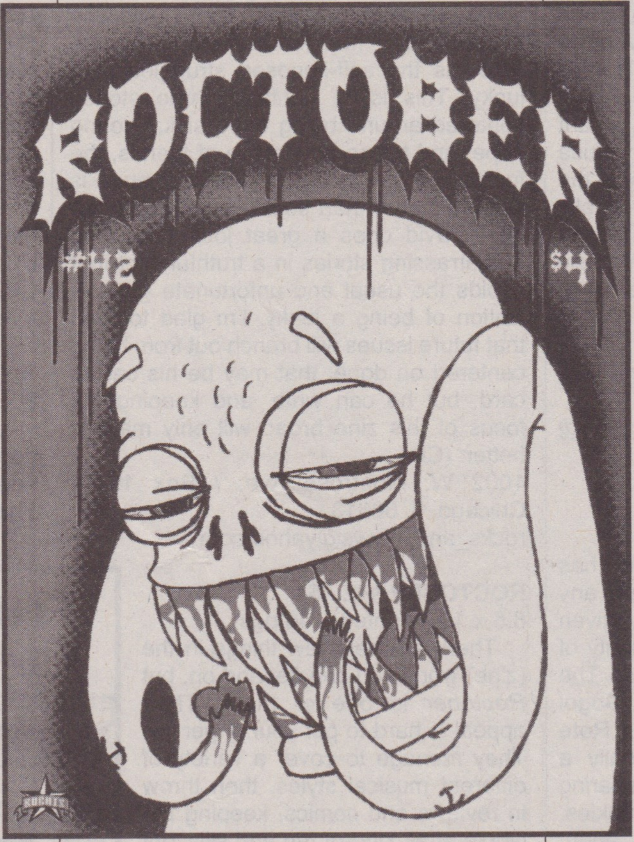
This miniature per-zine reminded me of a lot of mid-'90s grrrl zines, the sort of thing Pander zine distro would have carried. A little snippet of someone's life and ideals, complete with top tens and girl love angst. Sarah Rose lives in Virginia, in the same small town she grew up in as far as I can tell. There are heartfelt writings about family and hometown life and idealized TV dads. (LG)
Sarah Rose / PO Box 816 / N. Tazewell, VA 24630

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #194 / trade
5.5 x 8 – printed – 32 pgs – Finnish

Here is more monthly punk rock from Finland. Included in this issue are plenty of new record reviews, interviews with the bands Neuroottiset Pelimannit, and Toe Tag. Plus there is an article on how to use a computer music program. And as always there are some cool ads, photos, and contact addresses. (HH)
PO Box 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland
www.punkinfinland.net/tv/english

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #78 / $1 + stamps or trade
5.5 x 8 – copied – 56 pgs

This guy has been putting this thing out for fourteen years, and I've been reading it (not regularly) for at least eight. The format hasn't changed much in that time—it opens with show reviews, then there are interviews, then reviews, then some miscellaneous writing. I'm disappointed that the interviews have not improved. They utilize mostly the same questions, which weren't very good to begin with. It's like in thermodynamics, how if you don't put energy into a system, it decays. However, the photos in here are pretty good, the best I've seen from *TTWN*, and they reproduced well. There is not a lot of crossover, though, between the bands he covers and the bands one finds in punk zines. The highlight has always been Boone's political analysis, which is insightful and informed. But this issue he skipped it to write about his vacation. The thing about this zine that makes me crazy with rage is that he is the most boring zine writer going. Don't any of his readers level with him? To do 78 issues and still not have a clue about this stuff, I can't understand it. To punish your enemies, lock them in a room with the last ten issues of this zine. (JM)
PO Box 1444 / Columbia, MO 65205-1444
ttwn@hotmail.com



TRUST #115 / $5
8 x 11 – printed – 68 pgs – German

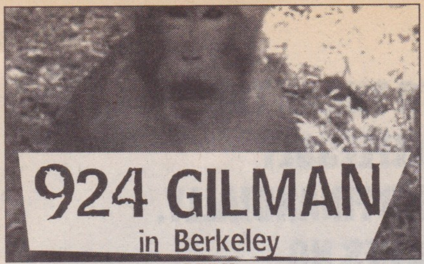
As always, this is an excellent punk rock fanzine. Featured in this issue are interviews with film director Liz Nord, who talks about her film *Jericho's Echo* that covers the theme of punk rock in Israel. Also included in this issue are band interviews with Party Line, Das Krill, and Disco Drive. There is also an interesting interview with the writer Ingrid Strobl discussing her new novel about a female junky. The fanzine also has interesting columns and, of course, plenty of new record reviews and ads. (HH)
Dolf Hermannstaedter / Postfach 11 07 62 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

VOICE OF A GENERATION #1 / $6? suggested donation
8.5 x 11 – printed – 28 pgs

"A crucial zine for crucial times." I feel like I may not be the best person to review this, as I pretty much hate straight edge. That said, there are some great HC photos in here, writing of disillusionment with the "scene," reviews, and interviews with Birds of a Feather and The Defense, talking about edge, values, and crews. This has a very nice layout, and comes with a Birds of a Feather 7". If sXe is your thing, I would say, send this guy your money. (MD)
Crucial Response Records / Kaiserfeld 98 / 46047 Oberhausen / Germany

THE YELLOW RAKE #3, Vol. 1 / $3
8 x 10 – printed – 28 pgs

The Yellow Rake is kind of like what I had always hope *The Onion* would be: really smart but totally hilarious with witty articles that are insightful and stuff. (Bonus: The authors seem to be really into shit-talking religion, which is great.) There are some really absurdist articles, and also one I highly recommend on racism by a white dude who works with Latino youth…it's called "Hey Whitey, Listen Up." This is a really good read, being smart as fuck and funny, and managing to not be preachy at the same time. I recommend it. (Second bonus: There's some awesome science fiction stories in here too!) (TW)
Brian Polk / PO Box 181024 / Denver, CO 80218
www.theyellowrake.com



APRIL

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Fatality (NV) / EMDC (NV)
World Of Shit

Saturday 15 $7
Babyland (L.A.) / 8-Bit (L.A.)
Ninja Academy (L.A.)
The Mormons / Grafitti Death Threat

Friday 21 $6
Deadfall / Formaldahyde Junkies (MN)
I Object (NY)
Sabertooth Zombie / Gnar

Saturday 22 $7
Internal Affairs (L.A.) / Blue Monday (CAN)
Miles Away (AUS) / Baader Brains
Panic (MA) / Right On

Sunday 23 $6
5PM Show
108 (L.A.) / Look Back & Laugh
Lights Out / Gather

Friday 28 $6
Monster Squad / Action (CAN)
Peligro Social / Dekoiz
The Vamps

Saturday 29 $7
Go It Alone (Can) / Paint It Black (PA)
The Loved Ones (PA)
Shook Ones (WA)
The Deadly Rhythm

Sunday 30 $6
5PM SHOW
Saros / Ocean (ME)
Embers / The Makai

MAY

Friday 05 $6
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Doomsday 1999 (WA)
16 Bitch Pileup / Ettrick

Saturday 06 $5
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Whiskey Dick Darryls

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